

of high imperialism. But none of this was possible without revolutionary changes of the sort that were not possible at the time. Even if they had been possible, it is unlikely that Hart would have been the man for the job, because such a programme would have called for him to work against fundamental British interests.

If the Harvard edition of Hart's letters has about it an air of being a pious memorial to a great man—it is, with Stanley Wright's quasi-official biography, a substitute for the statue of Hart that stood on the Shanghai Bund until the Japanese had it pulled down in 1942—the first volume of selections from the Morrison correspondence is a cool work of exposure. The brush, aggressive journalist who survived in Peking in 1937 came just when the struggle between the powers for privileges and spheres of influence in China was at its height. He leapt straight into the fray, kicking and shoving as he urged England to grab what she could of the foreign department of the Times, the more vigorous efforts of her rivals. He went so far in his despatches that even that arch-proponent of imperialism, Valentine Chirol, then deputy head of the foreign department of the Times, urged him to tone down his contentious references to the Foreign Office.

Bellicosity, whether personal or political, runs through nearly all of Morrison's letters and those of many of his correspondents too. There must have been something about him that drew like-minded men to him. Soon after his arrival he was writing letters from various parts of China telling him what the competition was up to and encouraging him to keep up the fight.

A January 1898 letter to J. O. P. Bland, the Times man in Shanghai, sets out some of his own views at that time. He writes that he perceived to "a peaceful British domination in Central China" was the growth of Russian power in Manchuria. He disagreed strongly with those who advocated a deal between Russia and Germany in north China in exchange for British supremacy in the Yangtze valley: the consequent growth in Russian power would be a grave threat to British interests in China and elsewhere. The only way to stop the Russians was by reaching an understanding with Japan. "I look with equanimity upon the result of the inevitable war in the Far East." As for Britain's share in the partition of China, the Yangtze valley was not sufficient. "Our true heritage in Asia is all South Eastern Asia up to and including the Yangtze Valley."

In 1903, after the Boxer uprising

POSTAGE: INLAND 11p ABROAD 12p
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provided Russia with an excuse in 1905 to strengthen still further her position in the north-east, he wrote to Chirol, "I myself ardently desire war. . . . Gladly would I give 1,000 to know that war had begun." Despite his promise to put nothing bellicose in his telegrams he gave a widely publicized interview to a Japanese journalist in which he expressed his sanguinary hopes.

When war came he was delighted, and he did not want it to end before Russia was "saignée à blanc" and "crushed beyond repair". He indignantly rejected charges of Japanese atrocities from the safety of Peking, and submitted all his messages on the war to the Japanese military censor before dispatch. So excited was he by it all that he now wanted "a desperate war between France and Germany".

A year after the victory of the Japanese, Morrison suddenly turned against them, to the confusion of his employers and the indignation of Tokyo. The Times remained strongly in favour of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, to Morrison's evident dissatisfaction. He took advantage of the paper's purchase by Northcliffe to launch a vendetta against his former patron. Chirol which ended with Chirol's departure.

This vindictiveness was nothing exceptional: several times we find him complaining to Printing House Square of a colleague's incompetence with the evident intention of blasting his career. He appears to have been a compulsive backstabber, not sparing even those who thought themselves his friends.

Just as his earlier hostility to Russia had made him uncritically pro-Japanese in the past, his new anti-Japanese posture induced him to discover merits in China's policy that had previously escaped his attention. He continued to play the concessions game hard: many letters are filled with talk of loans and railways. It is only with the upheavals of 1911 that the correspondence selected for this volume gives a good coverage of Chinese internal affairs.

As the imperial order collapsed Morrison's foreign contacts from all over China reported on what was happening in their localities, and various Chinese interest groups ensured that he knew of their views in the hope that he would pass them on to the world. Morrison was never a mere conveyor of information: he was by nature a propagandist, and he soon became the spokesman of the legation quarter's opinion that the unsympathetic warlord-bureaucrat Yuan Shih-kai was the man to become president and save China from revolution.

He was so carried away by his enthusiasm that he apparently did not even suspect that the mulish and looting by one of Yuan's divisions in Peking in 1912 was a catastrophe.



Two prints from a collection of Japanese prints, paintings, screens and books to be auctioned at Christie's on November 10. The one on the left, by the artist Yoshitomo, shows a French lady with her husband and them on the right, by Kunihisa, a Dutch soldier with his attendant holding an umbrella. Both are inscribed with Japanese characters which are phonetic transcriptions of words taken from European languages: the French lady stands below a scroll which contains various English nouns and the soldier is surrounded by Dutch nouns ("sku", "earth" etc).

fully stage-managed outrage intended to keep the capital of the republic in Yuan's bellwether in the north, thus excluding the southern revolutionaries from real power in the new regime. This volume closes with Morrison leaving the service of the Times and becoming an adviser—one might say public relations officer—to the man he had helped to make president. As Lo over China reported on what was happening in their localities, and various Chinese interest groups ensured that he knew of their views in the hope that he would pass them on to the world. Morrison was never a mere conveyor of information: he was by nature a propagandist, and he soon became the spokesman of the legation quarter's opinion that the unsympathetic warlord-bureaucrat Yuan Shih-kai was the man to become president and save China from revolution.

It would be tempting but misleading to draw too strong a contrast between Hart and Morrison. As committed imperialists, they differed more in period and style than substance. Hart was a man of the high summer of Victorian global

supremacy, while Morrison belonged to the intensely competitive age that followed. Seen against Hart's Roman auctoritas and air of standing aloof from the conflicts in which he was involved Morrison seems a scrapper, driven by the animal vigour that had enabled him as a young man to walk across Australia. Hart had some grounding in Chinese culture, whereas Morrison did not bother to learn the language, knowing China as a butcher knows a carcass.

The two collections of letters are of great interest, not just as enormously rich compendia of information on China's foreign relations but also for what they reveal of the psychology of imperialism. Questions of personal character aside, we do not have to choose between Hart growing immensely rich running the Chinese customs for Britain's benefit, and Morrison using his despatches and letters to express his personal and political aggression. They were, after all, two sides of the same counterfeit coin.

C. P. Fitzgerald's *China* (Gollancz, 1976, £8) has recently appeared in its third revised edition. This standard "short cultural history" now contains references to recent archaeological discoveries, but it still follows the design of the 1935 edition which the TLS called "concisely planned and brilliantly executed". Mr Fitzgerald has added Chinese history into some major epochs and treated the literature, religion and economics each period separately. His sketches stretch from Chinese prehistory to Taping Christianity and follow the development of philosophy and changing social systems. There are twenty-one plates, sixty-six illustrations, and nineteen maps.

Leon Trotsky on China (Gollancz, 1976, £3.75, paperback) is a collection primarily of the second Chinese revolution of 1927 and brings together for the first time in English documents and illustrations Trotsky's part in the Soviet policy towards China.

On foreign service

By Michael Irwin

ALAN ROSS (Editor):
London Magazine Stories
185pp. London Magazine Editions.
£3.75.

JAMES WRIGHT (Editor):
Winter's Tales 22
206pp. Macmillan. £3.95.

To judge from these two anthologies the short story has all but ceased to bloom on British soil. Six of the seven *Winter's Tales* take place abroad. The *London Magazine* stories span Africa, North and South America, India and the Far East. It might be thought that the foreign settings would provide a welcome breadth and colour, but in Alan Ross's selection, they often make for laboriousness. To bring to life for a British audience the physical and social contexts that give meaning to the story set abroad is a formidable task indeed. In Nayantra Sahgal's "Marband" and Takagi Kyoza's "The Old Women" the characters, setting and situation all lack substantiality.

This point concerning foreign settings is by no means peripheral. The *London Magazine* contributions tend to be short short stories with clear, deliberately limited aims. In stories of this kind, unclarity, or perhaps even unfairness, a technical miscalculation can mean the difference between a hit and a miss. Alan Ross's anthology, for all the variety of accomplishment it exhibits, constantly displays the precariousness of the form. In "After the Cinema" by Neil Jordan, the flavour of the boyish episode is obliterated by the smoothly literary style of the adult narrator. Owen Leeming's "Charley" and Martin Elliott's "India Tea in a China Cup" both show vigour and resource; but the element of experimentalism in the narrative method comes across as conspicuous rather than relevant. Several of the tales make use of gothic properties: the cloistered skeleton of a cherished wife in Isabel Strachey's "A Quiet District of Buenos Aires", a pet dead dog in Alan Massie's "Special Report". But neither author achieves a stylization quite sharp and secure enough to give the narrative the dream-like plausibility it needs. Michael Mawshaw's hulking homophonic, in "The Oriental Carnival", proves a better value, partly because it is not simply produced, like a deformed rabbit from a hat, to startle the reader, but has an active part to play in a developed story partly because the local township, Murrenburg, is sketched in with the tight sort of controlled indistinctness.

"My Organic Uncle", by David Pownall, is a lively character study. Graham Swift shows some odd, glibly promising in "The Recession Ground". But the best, and for the longest, contribution is by William Trevor: "Mrs Abercrombie's Wishes". This is not merely a pregnant incident but a fluent, carefully formed story. Mr Trevor draws with a dozen characters with a steadiness I have not always found in his work, avoiding sentimentalism or quaintness.

There can be no doubt, however, that *Winter's Tales* 22 is much the better anthology. None of the contributions is less than entertaining; three of them are a good deal more. Margaret Drabble's "Hogon-Dredge" is a good example of the clever ending is smaller in scale than the striking narrative that precedes it. Nadine Gordimer's "The Single Title" and Country "Lovers". Since, in both cases the lovers are a white man and a black girl the South African setting is intrinsic to the action. The emphasis is not on the immorality of apartheid, though that is made chillingly apparent, but on the destruction and distortion of tender human feelings. There is no editorial comment, for none is needed: these two tales are mutually illuminating. The author's economy, her suggestive reticence, her evocative selection of detail are continually impressive.

The most spectacular contribution is William Bloom's hundred-page novel, "The Philosopher's Stone". His vigour, energy and scope are dazzling. The Russian Jew and his quest for the stone, which he takes to be a magical talisman, is a story of immense power and depth, stimulating him to read, think and rethink his past. She also

Wishful thinking

By Eric Korn

J. B. S. HALDANE:
The Man with Two Memories
220pp. Merlin. £2.80.

They don't make SF anymore like this unfinished tract or testament, apparently written in the late 1950s and now presented with a preface by J. B. S. Haldane's sister, Naomi Mitchison. Like its author, it is crusty, opinionated, irritating and highly entertaining. It's a leisurely—not to say self-indulgently nattering—account of a distant, idiosyncratic utopia, with elaborate exegeses on the alphabet, the calendar ("each day was divided into 840 *viopmy*"), grammar (eight forms of the first person plural), one to the base 210. Everything Haldane thought could be improved, it has all the characteristics of crankily didactic utopias or dystopias, but unlike *Bulwer-Lytton's* unreadable *The Coming Race*, it is the product of an alert and interesting mind.

The plot is slight, slow-moving and full of diverticula—heaven

knows how long it might have gone on for—and merely serves as a counter-hanger for its author's remarkable collection of political, philosophical and literary hats. Space for comment is provided by a couple of devices. The narrator, one Ngok Thleg, a nihilist in his own perfect world of Ulro, who likes acquiring objects and flunked his cultural orthonology, studies the history and prehistory of his society. It is his memories, shown of some dangerous bits of advanced technology, that invade the mind of James Murchison, a crusty but likeable polymath, curiously enough a scholar equally at home in zoology and the classics, though "my knowledge of Vedic Sanskrit is most superficial". The two personalities get on well, publishing a solution to the four-colour problem almost at once, but soon Ngok Thleg (his name means "activated by the element gadolinium" but this is not to be taken literally) seizes the pen.

The superiority of Ulro, where man has for hundreds of millions controlled his ecology and his physiology, is underlined, even in little things: "our loudspeakers were usually somewhat less loud than yours, but incomparably clearer"; their food, which is better than the best of our flowers but theirs lasted longer and concentrated indium into the bargain. It is one of those kind, bruisable, clear-sighted societies which Wells foresaw in his rozier moods, with a great deal of better control, and gladly consented to "astronauts aren't allowed anything but the very best sexual experiences"; there is constant, universal, and effective psychotherapy, a great deal of craftsmanship, vegetarianism, and eurythmics; and some of the heavy work is done by autistic elephants. In one of the more backward regions, "as many as one per hundred thousand still had to have a wild operation for bad temper"; even the excreta were sweetened; Ulro, thanks to change in human intestinal flora, and the best musicians compose for the *light-bird*, a bird which has been bred for singing for 300,000 years (a footnote draws attention to the dust for paper-finishes in Dulac's Burlington's publication in the *Phil. Trans.* for 1773).

We are also given a planetary history from its beginnings through the establishment of a world state—after the battle of the thirty-one tractors—by Urizen of Golgotha (Blake), it is delightfully suggested, got the material of his prophetic books through mind-contact with Ulro, to the establishment of universal peace and socialism and the subsequent solution of virtually all other problems.

It could be a great bore, with all its didacticism and showing-off ("there was a lyric poetess, Mitilink, whom I should rate higher than Catullus or Theocritus; though how she would compare with Sappho if we had her complete works . . ."), but mostly it isn't. Haldane's intentions were philanthropic, his intelligence lucid, and his invention never failing. He is a man who can postulate an intelligent fungus that communicates by making biochemical jokes, or a tribe of snail-herders who, imitating their stock, develop a cult of asymmetry, enlarging one ear with heavy pendants.

Nothing happens between them, though Helen is led to wonder "what the saving to the health service would be if the psychiatric hospitals were staffed by prostitutes instead of nurses". The portrait of Helen is sympathetic, although as it turns out she works out her own conflicts at Norman's expense. The poor boy imagined they would get married, while she moves on, lets him down, and when the allotted Xueyue is over, takes up her life with added vigour. Norman, abandoned, is doomed to go from bad to worse.

It is an illustration of the damage that short-term therapeutic refutations can do, and of the gulf that lies between the expectations of people from different worlds, however close they may seem to come. It is not backward as he makes out, she takes immense pains with him, stimulating him to read, think and rethink his past. She also

Watching brief

By Jane Miller

ELIZABETH TROOP:
Woolworth Madonna
124pp. Duckworth. £3.95.

Love, jealousy and curiosity make spits of Elizabeth Troop's character. She is a woman who makes a woman of her. A working-class wife and mother dreams and surveys defeat in the only house left of a demolished Wandsworth terrace. Never quite allowed to speak for herself, as if she might offend, she staunchly avoids regretting that she left grammar school too soon, married too young, might be to blame for her daughter Carol's autism. Her secret passion for seduction she can never tell. Television makes her spy on him, and she lurks unseeably outside the Festival Hall and scrutinizes his dustbin for clues. Unscrupulous as she scans this opaque, self-contained woman, the author provides herself with a spy legitimized by his trade and his passion for her heroine. Edward is a journalist bewildered by the fascination this woman has for him, and he moves into her home, ostensibly to write an article about her family. As a journalist he can marvel at her husband Terry's "machismo" and see her as "peasant-like" yet "sharp, urban", but such formulations do not satisfy him, and he is reduced to raiding their chests of drawers and those receptacles on which their families fill with things that can neither classify nor do without.

The mystery of strangers' lives may nowadays seem lessened by

North and South

By Victoria Glendinning

DAVID BEAN:
The Hard Case
186pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

Helen is nineteen, wears long skirts and a bra, comes from the Home Counties and at the university read "French", actually. Wanting to help people, she enrolls on a social work course on Tyneside where her dominating lover is a university lecturer. She enjoys the work. For this fix, "in her life people depended on her and their dependence made her feel strong". Her "hard case" is the educationally subnormal young man Norman, whom she sees every Tuesday as part of her training. Encouraged by her discovery that he is not so backward as he makes out, she takes immense pains with him, stimulating him to read, think and rethink his past. She also

stimulates him sexually, a dangerous sedition on her part since he falls romantically in love with her.

Nothing happens between them, though Helen is led to wonder "what the saving to the health service would be if the psychiatric hospitals were staffed by prostitutes instead of nurses". The portrait of Helen is sympathetic, although as it turns out she works out her own conflicts at Norman's expense. The poor boy imagined they would get married, while she moves on, lets him down, and when the allotted Xueyue is over, takes up her life with added vigour. Norman, abandoned, is doomed to go from bad to worse.

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Go to work on a diet

By John Hawthorn

JOHN YUDKIN:
This Nutrition Business
264pp. Davis-Poynter. £4.50.

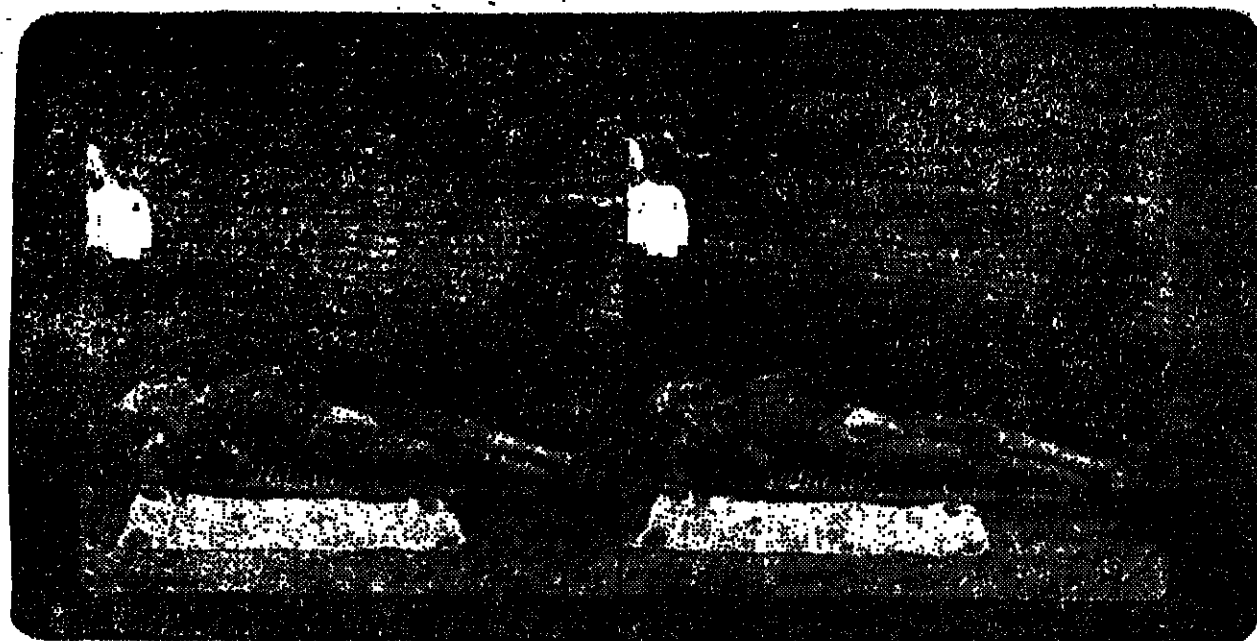
John Yudkin's *This Nutrition Business* is a straightforward account of the state of modern nutrition. Written in layman's language, it will be intelligible to all who are concerned with nutritional problems, whether as parent, biology teacher, health visitor, school meals supervisor, restaurateur, nurse or doctor. It is more than merely intelligible. Much of it is also entertainingly illustrated with stories from the author's clinical and research experience.

After an outline of the principal concepts of modern nutrition in the first half of the book, much of the second is devoted to popular controversies—breads white and brown, processed foods, diet and coronary thrombosis, the demonstrable dangers of high sugar consumption, and obesity with its consequences and control.

The book lets the facts speak for themselves, and its achievement is the lucidity with which complex concepts are expressed in non-technical language without serious loss of precision. In some cases this has meant some simplification of complex evidence (for example in the discussion of Linus Pauling's hypothesis on ascorbic acid therapy, and on the survey of cholesterol in coronary artery disease), but it could detect no bias even in the topics where my own views differ from those of Professor Yudkin.

In most of the controversial areas, Professor Yudkin presents the ascertained facts simply and plainly and then tells us of the interpretation he puts upon them. The honesty with which he does this is persuasive in itself. Similarly, before the facts, clarity of expression and freedom from prejudice are the merits of this book.

Although Professor Yudkin has spent much of his working life as an academic, he is a doctor by original training. For this reason I have a private prayer that this book be made compulsory reading for all British doctors. Medicine has its myths, and little effort is made to teach nutrition in the medical schools. Myths accumulate in the absence of given wisdom. Let the doctors but read this and at least heart patients will be permitted an egg for breakfast again.



Great men and high drama

By W. F. Bynum

W. R. MERRINGTON:
University College Hospital and its Medical School
301pp. Heinemann. £7.50.

Institutional history is fashionable nowadays. As a genre, it shares many charms and not a few pitfalls with biography. Like individuals, institutions have their own life histories. They are conceived, born, and nourished; they may grow, flourish, and mature, or decline, languish, and die; they can marry and beget progeny, have birthdays, move house. Consequently, many institutional histories take on characteristics of biography, a trait accentuated by the fact that loyalty to the subject is frequently a prime qualification in those undertaking these histories.

This has certainly been true for the history of medicine, where medical biography and institutional history have dominated. The historiography of medicine in London, for instance, consists largely of biographies of doctors whose careers have been spent at least partially in the capital, or histories of London medical institutions, such as the Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Surgeons, Medical Society of London, or the major teaching hospitals. Sir George Clark produced the official history of the College of Physicians, but most of

these institutions have had their historians generated from within.

In his history of University College Hospital and its associated medical school, W. R. Merrington thus follows a well-worn trail. He qualified at University College Hospital in 1935, was a staff surgeon for a number of years, and is currently curator of the Medical School Museum. Like its fellows, this hospital history focuses rather narrowly on the institution as a succession of buildings and on the biographies of some of the distinguished doctors who have studied and worked there. There is relatively little detail about the changing needs of the urban community which the hospital served, and little integration of the hospital's place in a wider medical, educational, or social framework. Nevertheless, Mr Merrington provides a readable narrative history of an institution which, in terms of teaching, research, and patient care, has occupied an important niche in the London medical scene since its foundation.

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drawn from their dependants—servants, apprentices, employees. It was more than half a century later that hospitals began to provide services which wealthy patients could not obtain more comfortably at home. The hospital's wing for private patients—recently the centre of some ideological skirmishing—was opened in 1936, built with funds raised from a public appeal. Earlier, large bequests from Sir John Blundell Mayle and Sir Donald Currie had secured the buildings for the present University College Hospital and the Medical School. An additional endowment from the Rockefeller Foundation just after the First World War permitted the creation of medical, surgical, and obstetrical units, staffed by individuals devoted to full-time teaching and research.

Mr Merrington's descriptions of developments such as these furnish the backdrop for his short studies of dramatic events and eminent doctors associated with the institution on Gower Street. Charles Dickens saw John Elliottson demonstrate the art of mesmerism on Elizabeth O'Key in early 1859, though Elliottson had to resign his appointment as physician to the hospital the following year, as Miss O'Key was suspected of being a consumptive actress who was manipulating her doctor. Eight years later, Joseph Lister, then a student at UCH, may have watched Robert Liston perform the first public operation in this country using ether as an anaesthetic. Another medical student, William Squire, administered the ether. Despite

Between 1857 and 1911, the period covered by the book, the UCH had over 100,000 patients collected in its photographic department, most of them virtually unknown today. This selection was made by Clark Worswick, who also contributes an introduction, and André Embree, professor at Columbia and authority on Indian history, has added a historical context. The pictures chosen include landscapes, architectural, military and portrait photographs, as well as maharajas, fakirs and tribesmen. Here we see a Hindu devotee doing penance on a bed of nails near the shrine of Kali in Calcutta.

Lister's education at the college and his hospital medical school, the premier surgeon of all time failed in his bid to obtain the chair in surgery at UCH in 1886, the year before he reported his new aseptic technique in the *Lancet*. Only with the gradual adoption of Listerian methods later in the century was modern surgery possible. Mr Merrington devotes individual chapters to two exceptionally gifted examples of the post-Listerian breed of surgeon, Victor Horsley and Wilfred Trotter.

The strong surgical tradition at UCH has been matched by a succession of talented physicians in the medical service, extending from the psychiatric pioneer, John Conolly, through the great Victorian priests of clinical diagnosis, William Jenner and John Russell Reynolds, to the great cardiologist, Thomas Lewis, and the late Max Rosenblatt. Chapters on the organization of the hospital during the Second World War, the growth of specialist departments, the evolution of the nursing service, and the development of effective obstetrical techniques round out Mr Merrington's account of UCH during the present century.

As Clifford Pugh justly remarks in the foreword, this book is not a professional historian's history. Mr Merrington eschews controversial issues and critical analysis of its man and events he describes in plain and simple language. But University College Hospital has had an ample share of both, which makes this a lively, selective, account.

When a man's fifty

By Gavin Ewart

DEREK BOWSKILL and ANTHEA LINACRE:
The "Male" Menopause
196pp. Muller. £3.95.

There is no such thing, strictly speaking, as a male menopause. All the medical authorities quoted in Derek Bowskill and Anthea Linacre's book agree about that. Men do not undergo physical changes dramatically affecting their reproductive powers—which are at their height at the age of eighteen and very gradually diminish until they reach the age of seventy or eighty. The onset of ageing and the loss of physical vigour, at forty or fifty, does however sometimes lead to depression or a wild outbreak of youth-chasing (young girls, young clothes) and, quite often, impotence. This is the "syndrome" discussed here. Women journalists are jealous about the menopause, and don't want it taken away from them. Perhaps a new word should be invented—womenopause (on the analogy of Miss Triant's "womanthrop" in *The Importance of Being Earnest*).

There are three parts to this short book: *The Syndrome*, *The Phenomena* (case-histories) and *The Remedy*. The first describes the signs: dizzy spells and hot flushes, irritability, depression, a man's feeling that he has got as far as he will go in business life, an expectation of continuing decline unrelieved by any of the joys of youth. Business executives are particularly at risk. The middle-aged and the old—because youth is so idolized by the advertisers—are increasingly despised in our culture. "As a society we compound all these problems for ourselves by living in an ethos (worshipping youth and technology) that says 'After 40 you've had it,'" writes one of the Bowskill/Linacre correspondents. These include doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, the artist John Brabhy, Quentin Crisp, Colin Wilson. The sadness of the loss of these seems to stem from having

been overpraised when young, and not really to be relevant in the thesis at all.

If a man is declared redundant at fifty, disappointed in his children or without children, no longer sexually interested in his wife—who herself may be menopausal—he is a candidate. The impotence is "psychological," like 98 per cent of impotence, though it may be reinforced by obesity and alcoholism ("Brewer's Droop").

The case-histories are interesting and often moving. "In the car sometimes he's cried—actually started weeping when he's been driving. He's taken his hands off the wheel and gone all purple in the face." "It was made much worse when all the others were made into full somethings or other at the office and he wasn't. This upset him greatly." One propounds the theory that wives at the menopause smell different and so do not arouse their husbands as before. One very sensibly writes: "To the average peasant the idea of the male menopause would be ludicrous. He would be feeling bloody lucky just to get tomorrow's dinner." Implying that affluence and time for introspection are ingredients. And another: "I've never met a happy homosexual. There's no such thing." A woman doctor comments that men aren't allowed to cry, that makes it harder for them; they have to try to laugh it off. Prostitutes can be therapeutic, she says, and should not be frowned on by the over-moral. Occasionally what is described sounds a little like an "ordinary" nervous breakdown, or like the confession of one of Philip Toynbee's "underdogs." The period as a whole is characterized, with some justification, as a "second adolescence."

The authors give Gauguin and Schwaiger (forty-three and thirty-eight respectively when they opted out of their careers) as examples of the rebellion of the unconscious. One opted out of respectable family life as a businessman, the other out of the musical world. Gerard Manley Hopkins, at age forty-one, is referred to as another case, but it is just as likely that his

"languishment of body and mind" and the agony of his soul ("Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I returned" (quoted and claimed as menopausal) were part of the melancholy of the repressed homosexual. Perhaps they should have mentioned (or quoted) Dante: "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita/Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura/Ché la diritta via era smarrita." They cite characters in plays by Bolt, Mortimer and Chekhov (banned). A better example might be Sir Roy Vandervort in *Amis's Girl* 20, whose pursuit of much younger women is his main characteristic (forty-seven and seventeen).

On the last section, *The Remedy*, rests the book's claim to be therapeutic. Both the authors and their medical experts agree that drugs, except by suggestion, do little good. The mental attitude has to be changed. One suffers less to accept old age and death as inevitable, but at the same time he must not give up trying and sink into depression. The means to combat the condition are, in fact, philosophical in the old sense, rather than psychological or medical. Other people can help, but the victim must attain maturity on his own. It is very much a mental disease of businessmen in big cities; the Oxfordshire rustics of *Lark Rise to Candleford* never knew such a thing. In an appendix are the Haller and Myers paper, "The Male Climacteric" (1944), and other relevant medical documents, confusing to the layman unless words like panhypopituitarism and gonadotrophin titres mean something to him.

A faintly jazzy style, not always quite literate ("his fast-disappearing youth"—youth does not disappear all at once), but in the hands of the Haller and Myers paper, "The Male Climacteric" (1944), and other relevant medical documents, confusing to the layman unless words like panhypopituitarism and gonadotrophin titres mean something to him.

Take your partners

By Stuart Sutherland

GLENN WILSON and DAVID NIAS:
Love's Mysteries
The Psychology of Sexual Attraction
166pp. Open Books. £3.95.

There was a time when love's mysteries were left to poets, playwrights and novelists. In the modern preoccupation with the subject that this preserve has now been invaded by newspaper columnists, physiologists, psychologists, and social scientists of every ilk. The would-be lover need never go short of advice or information. Alex Comfort has put the Good Sex Guide's seal of approval on bondage, although he maintains a discreet silence on whether flagellation is an acceptable horse-douche. A diligent sex therapist, assisted by an eminent physiologist, has discovered that the optimal frequency for vibrators is eighty cycles a second. Masters and Johnson have observed more than 10,000 orgasms "under laboratory conditions". The wisdom gained by such research is distilled both in learned tomes and in innumerable popular books and is presented in university courses and even in schools.

Love's Mysteries provides just such a course and is no exception to the precept that "a course on true love never did run amok". The authors present a popularized account of "scientific" findings on love and sexual attraction. Few of the results they present would surprise our grandmothers, let alone a generation already only too familiar with literature of this sort.

Statements of the following kind abound: "In chapter evidence is presented that attractiveness is a more highly valued commodity in women than in men"; "a person's awareness of whether or not they are good looking is relevant to their self-concept"; "the extent to which we possess or lack beauty is important to a number of life's several areas"; "men prefer a girl who emits arousal signals"; "men prefer women who others find hard to get". These quotations illustrate both the contents and the style: the latter is an uneasy mixture of ponderous jargon and plain prose. The authors remember the likely composition of their readership, cosy slang. The illustrations are meretricious and would disgrace an American publisher let alone a British one: a histogram made out of assorted couples going up and down in lifts is said to signify the "mean testosterone level (and S.D.) in nanograms" of heterosexual and homosexual men.

Some of the research findings presented are, it is true, more interesting, but they are often difficult to interpret. Testosterone levels are lower in homosexual men than in others, though whether this difference is a cause or an effect is not established. It will be a comfort to some that 39 per cent of women in Greenwich Village rate small bottoms as the most attractive anatomical feature in men, whereas only 2 per cent value large penises.

When married couples are compared on a number of variables ranging from physical height to seriousness of purpose, it is found that like tends to marry like. Elsewhere in the book, the reader is presented with a statistical trend but nothing is said about individual differences: too often the means conceal considerable variance. The book between a couple tends to be stronger if in order to surmount such obstacles as parental disapproval or different religious faiths: it is not clear whether this phenomenon is caused by the less devoted couples parting under such strains, or, as in so many spheres of life, because the more difficult something is to attain, the more its attainment is valued.

The earnest reader can derive

one or two helpful pointers for his own conduct. If you want to be liked, it is better to start by being nice rather than to be nice all the time. Spanish fly is not recommended but mescaline is. Do-it-yourself methods of treating impotence, frigidity, premature ejaculation, and other sexual problems are just plain boring with your partner no amount of sexual therapy will help: the only solution is to find another.

Self-respecting members of the Women's Liberation movement are recommended to skip the chapter on the evolution of love. Following the tenets of the great new "science" of sociobiology, the authors attribute feminine coquetry and submissiveness together with male aggression and promiscuity to the genes inherited from our primate ancestors. Our own society is one of the 16 per cent of known cultures that are monogamous: most follow a more natural order and are polygamous.

The final chapter attempts to predict the future of love: the prospects are apparently good if not particularly entertaining. Divorce will continue to increase and we shall become more tolerant of diverse ways of expressing love ranging from chastity to promiscuity and including threesomes, communes, swinging clubs, and "leisure machines". According to the authors, this outcome has already been reached in California, a society to which in an unguarded and revealing moment they apply the epithet "civilized".

The authors are erudite men and it is unfortunate that they have chosen to write lightly over the subject, attaching equal weight to the banal, the bizarre and the potentially important finding. Perhaps they should not be blamed too much; one senses the prodding of an editor in the background, and after all there's gold in them thar hills of Venus. Few readers will feel tempted on closing the book to repeat Damon's words: "Nunc scio quid sit amor."

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The Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam

What tourists are those?
Dark dogs of memory throw their darkness at them.
Without payment they enter the synagogue,
With black paper skull caps
Which they have taken from a box at the gate.
Gilded ornaments turn silently from the ceiling
Over empty benches with no sinners in them, or sin.
Leftovers of prayers stick to the walls
Like the crust of limestone in an old kettle.

Who are they, that have come from waterless places
And have become crossers of many bridges
In countries whose railway stations' names
are always "Entrance" or "Exit"?
After that they liquidate meat
In restaurants with knife and fork
With sad table manners.

Who are they? Sometimes one of them
In a moment of calm absent-mindedness
Will look at his wrist to see time
But there is no watch.

"I think that a return-ticket
Is a very exciting thing," the woman said,
"And full of promising love."

A Dog After Love

After you left me
I let a dog smell at
My chest and my belly. It will fill its nose
And set out to find you.

I hope it will tear the
Testicle of your lover and bite off his penis
Or at least
Will bring me your stockings between his teeth.

Like the Inner Wall of a House

I found myself
Suddenly, and too early in life
Like the inner wall of a house
Which has become an outside wall after wars and devastations.
I almost forget
How it is to be inside. No pain any more.
No love. Near and far
Are both at the same distance from me
And equal.

I never imagined, what happens to colours.
Their fate is man's fate: light blue still slumbers
In the memory of dark blue and night. Paleness
Sighs out of a purple dream. A wind brings smells
From far off
And itself has no smell.
And the leaves of the Huzzar* die
Long before their white flower
Which never knows
About the greenness in spring and dark love.

I lift my eyes to the mountains. Now I understand
What it means to lift eyes, what a heavy load
It is. But those hard longings,
That pain-never-again-to-be-inside!

*Huzzar—a wild flower whose leaves grow and die in spring and whose white
flower grows only in autumn.

A Song About Rest

Shaw me a land whose women are more beautiful
than those on its posters,
and whose gods lay good things
around my eye, on my forehead and my painful nape.

"Never again will I find rest for my soul."
Each day a new lot day passes,

and I must still return
to these places where they measure me
with trees grown since and all that has been destroyed.

I stamp my feet and shuffle my shoes
to get rid of what has stuck to me.
Dying of my soul, dirt of emotion, sand of love.

"Never again will I find rest for my soul."
Lying in the revolving chair
of an AA gunner, or a pianist
of a barber, and I understand
nothing and nothing.

The heritage of Hebrew poetry

By T. Carmi

The distinctive features of Hebrew poetry are its intensely biblical, its wide geographical distribution and its diversity. It has been written virtually without interruption from biblical times to the present day. And it has been written in the four corners of the earth. Its major historical centres were situated in Palestine, Babylon, Italy, Germany, Spain; but it also had important branches in North Africa, the Balkans, Yemen and Holland.

This character of longevity and mobility has involved several fresh, and sometimes false, starts. It involved centuries of continuity, followed by bouts of amnesia, and then a recollection of neglected treasures. It also meant that Hebrew poetry could be at varying stages of its development, during the same period, in different areas. To cite one example: while Hebrew poetry was still liturgical and traditional in eleventh-century Italy and Germany, it was experimental and secular in Muslim Andalusia. The diversity is a natural outcome of the surrounding cultures. As it moved from one centre to another, Hebrew poetry assimilated the local thematic and stylistic conventions. Only against the shifting perspectives of this long tradition can modern Hebrew poetry be seen in focus.

It is with Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934) that Hebrew finds its modern voice, and in the process rediscovers important chapters of its long history. In 1890 Odessa was the centre of Hebrew letters. By 1920 it was superseded by Palestine. This critical transition affected the prosody of Hebrew poetry, its musical key and, of course, its themes and locales.

Under the influence of Yiddish, Russian and German, the syllabic system—which was the legacy of the Hebrew poets of Italy—was discarded in favour of the tonic-syllabic or accentual system, the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, as in English, German or Russian verse. This change was effected mainly by Bialik, the acknowledged leader of the Odessa circle.

It was a welcome and, in retrospect, natural change, since it renewed the link of Hebrew poetry with the patterns of stress that had marked biblical verse and parts of the early *piyut* (liturgical poetry) in Palestine and Italy, do not mean to imply that all these systems are identical. The precise metrical nature of biblical and early classical Hebrew poetry is still a subject of scholarly discussion. But the principle of stress, whether of phrases, words or feet, is common to all of them. Hebrew poetry, after having practised the quantitative metrics of Arabic in Spain and the syllabic metrics of Italian, was, in a sense, returning to its origins, to a quality inherent in the language when it reverted to accentual rhythms.

The change in key, however, which was forced upon Hebrew when it moved to Palestine, was far more traumatic. This was the changeover from the Ashkenazi pronunciation, then current in Europe, to the Sephardic pronunciation that became standard in Palestine. Thus a line (from a poem by Bialik) that sounded something like *hail bepeyinu* (hail in our house, hail, hail) became *hail bepeyinu* (hail in our house, hail, hail).

The fluidity and flexibility of *ushkenazit* was replaced by the harsher, end-stressed beat of *sefaradit*. Many of the older poets, the founding fathers of modern Hebrew poetry in its European phase (1880-1920), were incapable of making the transition. Their ear was too finely attuned to the Ashkenazi musical patterns in which they had been reared. Bialik, who settled in Tel Aviv in 1924, only attempted *sefaradit*. In his children's poems. A few of his contemporaries did try to transpose their earlier works into *sefaradit* so that they should make musical sense to younger readers and future generations. The attempt was rarely successful. Not surprisingly, those Ashkenazi poems that were written in free biblical cadences suffered least in transit.

Bialik had the distinction of providing Hebrew poetry with a new idiom, which fused together the various strata of the language. These strata tended to remain disparate, mainly because of the absence of living speech. Moreover, since the cultural sources were clearly demarcated, revered and rehearsed, words had difficulty in arriving unaccompanied; they were usually followed by a host of intrusive relatives. The result in the poetry of the emancipatory movement known as the *Haskalah* (1781-1881)—which advocated the secularization of Jewish life—was a mosaic technique, a patchwork quilt of involuntary quotations and allusions which stifled the individual voice. (This florid, euphuistic style, known as *melitsa*, should not be confused with the deliberate and artful manipulation of biblical verses practised by the Hebrew-Spanish poets in the Middle Ages. Bialik, in describing his younger contemporaries, wrote: "The reign of *melitsa* [of *Haskalah* poetry] declined. The biblical verse no longer walked before them like a blind man's cane, but pranced after them playfully.")

History thoughtfully paired Bialik with Saul Tchernikhovsky (1875-1943), the other major figure of the period. Bialik's career, his *shet* (small town) background, religious education and subsequent encounter with secular culture were typical of the East European Hebrew writer. His poetry, his unerring linguistic instincts, seemed to recapitulate successive stages of Jewish history. He was (sometimes, rediscovered) the voice of the people at a critical moment in its history.

As Tuvia Rüben writes in *The Modern Hebrew Poem* (edited by B. Burnshaw, T. Carmi and E. Spicchandler, New York: Schocken, 1966):

When two walls collapse, they sometimes meet at the moment of falling and form an arch. Bialik's poetry forms such an arch over the ruins of the traditional world into which he was born; and it reflects the collapse of the tradition. The world of faith around him crumbled as an absurdity; the certainty of accepted ideas disintegrated into despair. It is the expression of this despair—in more or less old poetic forms reshaped with great freedom—that gives Bialik's world its unique tension.

Tchernikhovsky was far removed from the "collapsing walls" of the traditional world. His upbringing was untypical: he received a secular Hebrew education and a thorough grounding in Russian literature. The landscapes of his childhood—the fertile fields and vast steppes of the border region between Crimea and the Ukraine—were a living presence in his poetry until his dying day. His nature poems have a wealth of detail, a breadth and freedom of expression, that were unique in Hebrew poetry. He was by far the most European Hebrew poet of his generation. His translations, from fifteen languages, of national epics and of Renaissance and Romantic works, reminded Hebrew poetry of the larger cultural frame of reference within which it had flourished in the Spanish and Italian periods. While Bialik devoted endless energy and erudition to the "ingathering" (*khiva*) and editing of forgotten Hebrew sources, Tchernikhovsky was engaged in a parallel venture: the ingathering of European classics, from antiquity to his time, from which Hebrew poetry had been severed in the ghetto-centuries. He was acutely aware of the need to revitalize Hebrew poetry not only by the infusion of new themes, but also by refocusing attention on formal and aesthetic problems, and by cultivating European genres, such as the ballad, the sonnet and the narrative idyll. In an affectionate monograph, he paid homage to Immanuel of Rome, the first Hebrew sonneteer, and in the preface to his own collection of sonnets he bewailed the musical poverty of Hebrew poetry.

Compared to Bialik, Tchernikhovsky was an outsider; he seemed to be more at home in the *Odyssey* and *Kalends* than in the *Tanach* and *Zohar*. And though he consistently enlarged the vocabulary of Hebrew—some of his favourite areas were flora, fauna and the female anatomy—his idiom was far less flexible and resonant than Bialik's. The novelty of Tchernikhovsky's interests and the range of his cultural sources sometimes elicited extreme reactions. In retrospect, however, it is clear that he was neither the "pagan" nor the "Greek" that some of his critics made him out to be. It would be more accurate to say that Bialik and Tchernikhovsky provided Hebrew poetry with two basic models: the one intensely Jewish, steeped in the Yiddish and Hebrew lore of the East European milieu; the other more aware of European literature. In the works of later poets, each of these attitudes could be carried to extremes; but on the whole they complemented each other and contributed to the synthesis effected by Israeli poets.

Bialik's linguistic achievement is all the more remarkable when we remember that, unlike Russian, he did not have a native tongue from whom he could learn the secrets of popular speech. Nor could he eavesdrop on the women at work in the kitchen, as did J. M. Synge; for the simple reason that the women in Odessa between 1890 and 1910, when he was writing his greatest works, were not gossiping in Hebrew. He was, of course, aware of the challenge. In 1910 he wrote:

I am now particularly taken by the folk genre. The Hebrew language has never experienced it, and there is something especially poignant about the situation: folk-songs in a language that is not spoken!

But although Hebrew was not revived as a spoken language in Palestine until the end of the nineteenth century, it was not, as is commonly thought, "dead". It was, of course, the language of study and prayer, but prayer that was generally understood and not recited by rote. And it is important to remember that the prayer book, which was edited in the late Middle Ages, is actually an anthology of the various layers of Hebrew. It was also the language of family observations and communal festivities, of legal and commercial documents, of historical chronicles, municipal records, tombstones, inscriptions, and irreverent parodies of sacred texts; as well as the lingua franca of Jews from various countries.

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Some poets frankly admitted failure: "A blossoming winter contrived to entice me but I dreamed of the deserts of snow," wrote David Sholem, who first came to Palestine in 1909. There were poets who took refuge in childhood memories, writing from behind closed shutters in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, just as the early painters in the *Yishuv* (Jewish settlement) continued to inhabit an imaginary, cloud-filled *Ecole de Paris*. Others, and one can hardly blame them, latched on to the exotic, postcard aspects of the country: camel, desert and palm trees, snatching members in the strange oriental country, ransacking the Bible for glittering analogies.

Broadly speaking, it was the poets of the Palestinian period (1920-1947), such as Karmi, Greenberg, Lamdan, Shlonsky, Sh. Shalom and Alterman, who put the *Sleeping Beauty* to work on the field. Those were the poets who first introduced the rhythms of the

spoken language into Hebrew poetry and brought it, somewhat belatedly, into the twentieth century. And as so often in the history of Hebrew poetry, the new surge of creativity was accompanied and catalyzed by an influx of foreign influences; in this case, Russian Futurism and Symbolism, and German Expressionism. This, however, is only a partial list of the imported schools. A glance at the biographies of the poets, even in a limited selection, will give the reader an inkling of the varied cultural backgrounds, both Jewish and European, that were vying with each other. The Palestinian phase witnessed an unusual compression of poetic techniques and ideologies, and an accelerated, almost abnormal, rate of development and change. Processes that in literatures with a normal "family life" may extend over many decades were here telescoped within a short, turbulent period.

Hebrew poetry's encounter with its homeland often produced poems of an ecstatic, almost messianic tone, such as "Tel" by Abraham Shlonsky (1900-1973), which was written around 1927 and forms part of a sequence named after Mount Gilboa in the Valley of Jezreel:

Dress me, good mother, in a glorious robe of many colours,
and at dawn lend me to toil.
My land is wrapped in light as in a prayer-shawl,
The houses stand forth like phylacteries.
Here the lovely city says the morning prayer to its Creator,
And among the creators
is your son Abraham,
a road-building hard in Israel.
And in the evening twilight, father, will return from his travels,
and, like a prayer, will whisper joyfully:

"My dear son Abraham,
skil shadows and bones,
Hallelujah!"

Shlonsky was one of the leading modernists of his time; iconoclastic, aggressively secular, the *enfant terrible* who spearheaded the revolt against Bialik's classicism. He translated the poems of Yessai, Maykovsky and Blok; he shocked the traditionalists by making "Maimonides stare at a portrait of Bakunin". Yet even he, when he came to celebrate his pioneering days, found himself drawn to sacred imagery. He appropriated the landscape by compounding biblical

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allusions with spoken rhythms and neologisms. In "Tol" he has dressed himself in a Joseph's coat of many colours—a very festive outfit for a day's work at tarring roads. And he summons up a familiar scene from the traditional Jewish home: the blessing that the father bestows upon his children when he returns from the synagogue on the eve of the Sabbath. He does not see himself as an ordinary poet but rather as a "read-building bird" of Israel. Defiance and piety, innovation and tradition are played off against each other throughout the poem.

The trials of the pioneer, the spiritual and physical possession of the land (the landscape became one of the main protagonists of Hebrew verse and prose), the zeal of the return—these are the salient themes of the Palestinian period. But the fervour was also counterpoised by a starker account of the realities of everyday life. Lea Goldberg (1911-1970) shows us the darker side of the picture in her poem "Tel Aviv 1948"—1948 being the year she emigrated to Palestine:

The masts on the hovercrafts then, were like the masts of Columbus' ships, and every raven that perched on announced a different shore. And the kibbuz of the travellers walked down the streets and the language of an alien land was plucked in the *hamsin* days like the blade of a cold knife...

Like pictures turning black inside they all turned inside out: pure winter nights, rainy summer nights of overseas and hazy mornings of great cities. And the sound of footsteps behind your back drummed marching songs of a foreign army, and, so it seemed—if you but turn your head, there's your town's church floating in the sea.

This is a far cry from Shlonsky's pioneering ecstasy. It is a violent poem: the earth heaves like a sea; disembodied kibbuzim walk on the street; alien languages—those the poet hears and, presumably, those she carries within herself—slash at the parched eastern day; and the entire country is like the obscure interior of a camera, reversing all it sees and hears, turning white into black. In fact, the operative principle of the poem is the reversal of memory and of physical objects. The terror of the last stanza is heightened when one recalls the old Hebrew legend that in the end of days, all the synagogues of the world will converge on the Land of Israel. This, too, is reversed: it is not the synagogue, but the town church that will float into view, the moment one dares look back. And for Lea Goldberg, the translator of Petrarch and Dante, the Church represented not only pogrom and persecution; it was also the repository of precious art and music.

By now there are several genera-

tions of Israeli poets who have not known the taste of loving between two homelands—a phrase taken from a poem by Lea Goldberg. Their perception of the desert was not impeded by the memory of soft European mists. They were born in, and into, Hebrew. They took much for granted and, for a time, revelled in their sense of primacy. It is doubtful whether any of them, and they are now in their forties or fifties, would write a hymn to the Hebrew language, as did Hayim Lenky from his prison in Leningrad, or Nathan Alterman from his sidewalk café in Tel Aviv.

The language is their birthright; it was not, consciously or unwittingly, competing with foreign models; it was not compensating for overcompensating for something lost or surrendered; it was not struggling to liberate itself from the gravitational pull of a many-layered tradition. The motto of the Israeli period, in the years following the War of Liberation of 1948, could have been a line from a poem by Avin Hillel: "I hate rhetoric (*melitza*) as the forest hates the picnicers"; or a line from Yehuda Amichai: "I, who use only a small part of the words in the dictionary..."

The entire modern period could be studied in terms of the relationship of spoken Hebrew to written poetry. The rate of change, until some twenty years ago, was both exhilarating and unnerving. Shlonsky, the brilliant innovator,

whose coinages fill an entire dictionary, had outrageously compared Bialik in the 1930s to a huge bus, blocking a one-way street. But Shlonsky himself turned into a double-decker in his lifetime. And the picture was further complicated in the 1950s, when the younger poets turned to Anglo-American models. This created a fairly distinct cleavage between the poetry—and, one might add, the criticism—of the modernizers and of their at first loyal, and then rebellious, progeny.

However, even the rebellious progeny soon discovered that fluency, immediacy and localism, though salutary and refreshing, could not substitute for historical depth; that the poetry would be impoverished if it did not regain its awareness of Jewish history and of Hebrew literature; and that, as Eliot pointed out, "tradition cannot be inherited and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labour."

Here again, one of the many wheels of Hebrew poetry came full circle: where the older writers attempted to free the language of involuntary associations, to silence—or, at the very least, to control—the background music of an obtrusive tradition, the younger writers in Israel have had to make a deliberate effort to repossess what their forerunners tried to repress.

Whether the poet wills it or not, there is often an element of counterpoint in Hebrew poetry. However colloquial the rhythms and even the diction, it is heard by the alert reader against the background of biblical poetry and of an uninterrupted poetic tradition. And some of the finest effects of modern Hebrew poetry will result from the tension between everyday speech and the undertones and overtones of a shared heritage.

Here, for example, is the opening stanza of a poem by Yehuda Amichai, entitled "A Sort of Apocalypse":

The man under his fig tree telephoned the man under his vine: Tonight they will surely come. Armour the leaves, Lock up the trees, Call home the dead and be prepared.

The introduction of the anachronistic telephone into the body of a famous biblical idiom for peace and peace of mind—they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid—is enough to jolt any Hebrew reader. But something is also happening on the physical, visual level. The peace-loving vine and fig tree shed their symbolic roles and are transformed into routine accessories of field camouflage.

Shlonsky, in his celebration of the road-building pioneers, heightened the meaning of the prosaic, investing it with religious significance. Amichai is dragging the familiar rhetoric down to earth. But in both cases, the underground waters of a great body of literature having its source in the Bible, find their way into the channels that are being cut open by the spoken language.

Amichai's lines are representative of the individualistic, anti-ideological tone of many of the younger poets. In this becomes a desperate attempt to step out of history. The individualization of Israeli society over the past twenty-five years has often brought writers to rebel against the sentiment of collectivity, of being an exposed nerve within a very nervous system. And, needless to say, one often finds both impulses, pulling in opposite directions, within the same writer.

But it is still very much a case of conscious acceptance of, or resistance to, a shared history and a common heritage, even though the younger writers have rejected the Eastern European view of literature as an agent of the national revival, a sort of audiovisual aid to communal morale.

A poem such as Amir Gilboa's "The Way" is entirely modern in tone and technique, may serve as a final illustration of the way in which Hebrew, at a given moment, can draw on a wide range of linguistic and historical associations. The fact that this can be done with relative ease—that the necessary cells of Hebrew are constantly on the alert and react to the slightest impulses—imposes a responsibility upon the poet to exercise that alertness.

together with me and father and my right hand was in it. Like lightning a knife flared among the trees. And I am so afraid of my terror, faced by blood on the leaves. Father, father, quickly save Isaac so that no one will be missing the midday meal. It is I who am being slaughtered, my son, and already my blood is on the leaves. And father's voice was smothered, and his face was pale. And I wanted to scream, writhing, and tearing open my eyes and I woke up. And my right hand was drained of blood.

The title of the poem alerts the reader to the biblical story, with which he is familiar from childhood or veiled references to biblical narrative, but the opening stanza frustrates these expectations. A childlike voice tells of an idyllic stroll, together with the father, through the forest. This scene is superimposed on the familiar biblical tableau. The innocence of the stroll seems to parallel the naivety of Isaac's question in Genesis: "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the holocaust?" And a biting allusion to the Song of Songs, like the sound of a distant pipe ("We left hand is under my head and his right arm embraces me") strengthens both the idyllic strain and the expectancy of dread.

The second stanza suddenly thrusts the poem back into the forest. Two key words from the Isaac episode come out into the open: the "knife" and the "trees" (*etzer*). In Genesis 22, *etzer* means "the wood [for the burnt offering]"; in the poem, as elsewhere in the Bible and in common usage, it refers to the "trees" of the superimposed scene.

The opening line of the second stanza moves as swiftly as the flash it describes. It is fluent and direct and in marked contrast to the child's comment, which is intentionally awkward in Hebrew. Though the choice of words is as entirely colloquial, the syntax and rhythm are childlike and naïvely convincing. Such contrasts run throughout the poem and give it literary usages an unquestionable tone of modernity and immediacy. *Ala*, here translated as "father", is really the equivalent of the English "daddy", but *hatsila*, "save", is a more stylized usage. These linguistic contrasts take place within an analogous juxtaposition of the traditional content and the intimate details of everyday life.

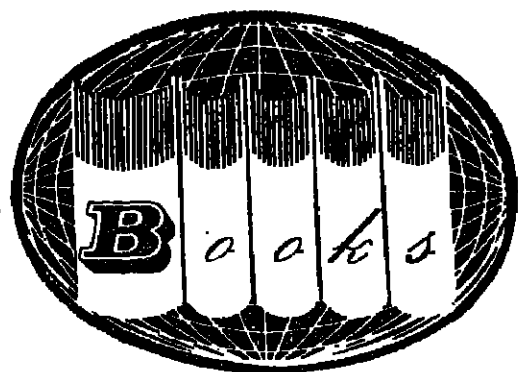
The intimacy of the child's voice, of *aba* and of the family reunion at lunch, is now grasped in its contemporary setting; it is a poem about the Holocaust, one of the dominant themes of modern Hebrew poetry. The father is both the legendary patriarch, the father of the tribe, and the poet's own father, who was slaughtered in the European forest.

In its language, images and events, the poem shuttles back and forth between the past and the present. The tableau and the other scene dissolve into each other. Personal biography, national memory—all become one in the childlike voice of the nightmare. The biblical motif ceases to be a "subject," as it should have been even a generation before Gilboa. The identification is so total and at the same time so ambiguous, that it can hardly be paraphrased.

The Israel Book Week takes place this year at the National Book League, 7 Albemarle Street, London W1 and runs from November 7 to November 14. More than 300 books will be on show and twenty-five publishers will be reprised. Among the other events of the Week are a poetry reading at 7 pm on November 8 entitled "No Land Like It" with Anthony Rudolph and Elaine Ives-Cameron reading work by Isaac Rosenberg, Pagla and Yehuda Amichai among others. The poet and translator Keith Bosley will read and discuss extracts from his translations of the Song of Songs, and the evening includes readings of Arab folk poetry. On November 10 at 7.30 pm there will be a lecture by the historian Martin Gilbert and during the Week the Greater London Arts Council will offer a "trial-a-poem" service. For more information on the Israeli poet Moshé and his poems (01-387-4000).

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TLS Commentary

Wanted: one father

Heinrich von Kleist's novella "Die Marquise von O..." was written in 1808 and published in 1810 in his periodical *Phœbus*; a year later he committed suicide on the shore of the Wannsee near Berlin. The remarkable thing about Eric Rohmer's film of the same name shown last Saturday on BBC 2 is its acknowledgment of the limitations of film as a medium. Although much of the dialogue is taken word for word from Kleist's story, sometimes transferred from reported to direct speech, the director has also made use of the rare device of projecting whole scenes from the original on the screen, in print, to emphasise turning points in the story, and above all to convey those thoughts and guesses at motivation—those contents of mind—which action alone

cannot intimate. Although the director follows the text closely in the film's mood and images, it is his vision of the Marquise's idiosyncratic style would not be satisfied with interpretation by actors and cameramen—the printed word must still be the vehicle of the creator's essential contents. Like most of Kleist's novelle, this one begins with a paragraph into which Kleist's action and surprise are densely crowded. The first sentence contains, in a highly compressed form, the story's central paradox:

In M... a town of some importance in Upper Italy, the widowed Marquise von O... a lady of excellent reputation and the mother of several charming children, placed an announcement in the newspapers to this effect: that she was got with child with

out her knowledge; that the father of the child she was to bear should come forward; and that, for her family's sake, she was determined to marry him. The film brilliantly translates into visual experience the opening scene in which the nocturnal Russian attack on a North Italian citadel is endured by the occupants. Kleist's sense of domestic detail and of the helplessness of children, and the nightmare realism of the swirling, aimless flight inside a burning town are brought to life in a few seconds of film which recall, and surpass, the effect of reading his few corresponding sentences of reportage. The subsequent slowing down of the film into an almost stately deliberation never becomes a beautiful bore, because a kind of stored energy has been generated in that first scene of eros and violence. Surprise is

promised, and the promise is kept by the behaviour of the characters if not entirely by the plot (the Marquise von O... may be at a loss to understand how she became pregnant, but we are not). Eric Rohmer, like Kleist himself, makes full use of the genre-painting possibilities of the theme while keeping to a stage-sized perspective. We find ourselves entirely convinced by the Robert passivity of the Marquise and her mother while the commander, her father, gives an extemporaneous interpretation of her point of view in an inexplicably impudent suture.

Edith Clever as the Marquise on stage almost the whole time, and there is a danger that she will exhaust herself and us in the full role to which she is confined (by the author) in the first half. Her moment of liberation, and spiritual greatness comes when, violently expelled from her parents' home, she refuses to give up her child, as though by her own hand, she has taken up the mantle of the father. This is one of the moments when M. Rohmer gives us Kleist's own words: "This admirable exertion of mind taught her to know herself, and she suddenly rised herself as though by her own hand, out of the depths into which fate had precipitated her."

With its tension between the incongruity, indeed the absurdity, of the story's central event, and its circumstantial, syntactically complex narrative—much of it in the elaborate grammar of reported speech—"Die Marquise von O..." is an immensely German work; not only that: both its prose and its morality belong to the years of the pre-Romantic age. Edith Clever enters into the very heart of Kleist's story, yet never allows this strangeness of time and place to lapse.

In this he is helped by Neve Almendros's remarkably sensitive camerawork and by a splendid cast. Edith Clever enters into the excitement and light-heartedness that follow on her moment of decision to the renewed gravity of the last scenes, when the truth is discovered, while Edda Skjölge and her outstanding performance is the number. The comic Russian count is played with a kind of passionate stolidity by Bruno Ganz, but his actor could give conviction to the commander's altercations with military men in the red-hot ferocity of his pride and to Marxist sentimentality.

No wonder Kafka valued Kleist's stories above all other German prose. Within the framework of a perfectly achieved novella, Kleist sets up a number of fundamental contradictions—between social convention and rational expectation on the one hand, passionate feeling and inward certainty on the other—in the resolution of which the infinite vulnerability of the world's institutions is acknowledged. He is a great producer and creator of a perfect harmony. I cannot imagine a more accurate realization of Kleist's intentions—many of them only half-conscious—than is achieved in this film.

J. P. Stern

'Semiotics and Communication', 'Mallarme and Gramsci', 'Trochaic and Iambic', 'Yeats's Byzantium Poems'

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Winston in the wilderness

By Stephen Koss

MARTIN GILBERT:

Winston S. Churchill
Volume 5: 1922-1939

1,655pp. Heinemann. £10.75 (£8.50 until February 28, 1977).

After proceeding through recent volumes at a snail's pace, the official biography of Sir Winston Churchill has broken into a canter, if not quite a gallop. In the course of nearly 1,200 tightly packed pages, the fifth and latest instalment spans a period of sixteen years, thereby setting a new track record for Martin Gilbert, successor to the late Randolph S. Churchill as authorized custodian of the project.

The inaugural volume, published a decade ago, treated the first quarter-century of the *Heidenleben* in 608 leisurely pages: dealing more specifically with personal than with public matters, it constituted "a simple and unadorned tale" in the words of its devoted author, who felt "little need to explain or enlarge." In the next volume, which followed a year later, the younger Churchill slowed down to confront "new issues and controversies, often of great complexity", covering fourteen years in 763 pages.

Soon afterwards, Mr Gilbert inherited responsibility, in a pair of volumes, each a side under a thousand pages, he dealt with a total of eight and a half years. Admittedly, his research was more exhaustive and his arguments more sophisticated than those deployed by his predecessor, whose final contribution must be acknowledged as the weak link in the chain. Nevertheless, after four hefty volumes, Winston had been brought no further than his defeat in the general election of 1922. There, he found himself more impatiently towards completion and who began to wonder whether their sagging bookshelves could accommodate the finished product.

It is not without a certain irony that Churchill's marathon biography has recovered momentum at a career conspicuously lost it. But, even in the doldrums, he remained a vastly more compelling figure than those who temporarily eclipsed and excluded him. Although he held high office under Stanley Baldwin during five of those sixteen years, the period as a whole was marked by isolation and bitter frustration. His accomplishments, political as well as literary, were considerable; and his involvements were characteristically extensive. On balance, however, opportunities were either denied or, worse, missed.

Defeated at the polls in 1922, Churchill was counselled by Margot Asquith to "be low." He kept friends in every nook and cranny. Private ships at sea in times of peace. For the time being, it was advice which he was prepared to accept. Preoccupied with his work on *The World Crisis* and the costly rebuilding of Chatsworth, he received, "with the utmost cordiality" by Baldwin, the new tenant at Number 10, who graciously acknowledged receipt of a presentation copy of Churchill's book. Then, with infinitely less finesse, Baldwin raised the spectre of Protection, Churchill, who justly claimed to "have a right to be a member of the Conservative Government, not in disparaging the new Ministers, but in the name of the old." He was received, "with the utmost cordiality" by Baldwin, the new tenant at Number 10, who graciously acknowledged receipt of a presentation copy of Churchill's book. 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biography of his ancestor, the first Duke of Marlborough, that project launched the campaign on a lengthy tour to North America, in his absence, the Simon Commission submitted its report on India to the Macdonald government. With strong encouragement from Baldwin, the Shadow Cabinet accorded bipartisan support to its proposal for dominion status.

Churchill was vehemently opposed to any concessions to Gandhi, whom he branded a "malicious fanatic", and to any plan that might "encourage false hopes in the minds of the Indian political classes". Along with Lord Reading, a former governor-general, he strongly blamed the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, for his policy of appeasement. But unlike Reading, who subsequently tempered his resistance, he grew more and more passionate in his denunciations of the Macdonald-Baldwin policy. He has become one of the subalterns of hussars of '96". Baldwin reflected, more accurately, Churchill was expressing the apprehensions of John Morley, whom he had visited at India Office, that "glittered pagoda", before the Liberal landslide of 1905. Churchill's attitude towards Indian nationalism was basically Morley's attitude, already out-of-date in the early years of the century.

By his intemperate opposition to Labour's Indian policy, which carried Baldwin's endorsement, Churchill cut himself adrift from the Conservative front bench. Mr Gilbert effectively makes the point that "his discontent . . . was widely shared". But Edward Cadogan, who agreed that Churchill's criticisms were "perfectly true" were "blunt and undiplomatic". What did Churchill hope to achieve? Was it principle or pique that motivated him?

In the opinion of Brendan Bracken, his faithful follower, Churchill cut himself adrift from the Conservative Party in 1939. But Baldwin, however, was able to see more clearly that Churchill had established nothing more than "transient contact" with the Tory élite, who lacked both the numbers and the resolution to topple Baldwin. Mr Gilbert, inclined to give Churchill the benefit of the doubt, has concluded that his "stand was increasingly portrayed as opportunistic and his arguments belittled and misrepresented". But Churchill's maledictory speech to the Indian Empire Society on March 18, 1931, the day before a critical by-election at Westminster St George's, permitted no other interpretation. Churchill continued to wage his

campaign against Indian constitutional change until the Government of India Act reached the statute book in 1935. "I am not going to bother any more", he then confided to one of Gandhi's close associates, "but do not give us a chance to say that we anticipated a breakdown." By that time, of course, Churchill was overwhelmingly concerned with European developments. As early as 1924, he had pointed to the potential danger posed by "enormous contingents of German youth growing to military manhood year by year" with dreams of "War of Liberation or Revenge". Although he shrugged off the possibility of a threat from Japan and extolled "the commanding leadership of Signor Mussolini, who does not shrink from the logical consequences of economic facts", he watched the unfolding of events in Germany with mounting alarm. Hitler's rise to power and the brutality of the Nazi regime confirmed his worst fears.

It is incontrovertible that Hitler's tyranny was anathema to Churchill. That, however, does not obviate the fact that his fundamental objections were strategic. In January 1935, comparing notes with G. M. Trevelyan, he likened the growing menace to the one that had existed in 1914; for that matter, it was "the same old story from the days of Marlborough and Napoleon". Germany's internal policies, however odious, disturbed him chiefly as a portent of Germany's aggressive designs. To Lord Londonderry, he remonstrated in May 1937 that "I certainly do not take the view that a war between England and Germany is inevitable". A sketch of Hitler, written that year for the *Evening Standard* and reprinted in *Great Contemporaries*, held out the vain hope that "the Führer of Germany should now become the Hitler of peace". Churchill's statements were therefore more equivocal than posterity and Mr Gilbert will allow.

It is Mr Gilbert's further contention that "from 1929 to 1939 Churchill's political advantage was irrelevant to Churchill", who embraced moral causes that "could only undermine his chances of a return to the Cabinet". Again the record is contradicted. The record of Churchill's endorsement periodically assured him that public opinion supported his restoration to office. Indeed his elevation to the premiership, perhaps Churchill did not "stand was increasingly portrayed as opportunistic and his arguments belittled and misrepresented". But Churchill's maledictory speech to the Indian Empire Society on March 18, 1931, the day before a critical by-election at Westminster St George's, permitted no other interpretation. Churchill continued to wage his

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To the Editor

F. R. Leavis

Sir—The letters from William Scammell and Stephen Sefton (Letters, October 15), deserve to be treated respectfully. I shall try to persuade Mr Sefton that, yes, he has misunderstood me; and Mr Scammell that Leavis's famous "yes, but . . ." can indeed advance an argument if only we can keep our heads and our tempers.

What both letters object to is Leavis's contention, which I endorse, that egalitarianism is an evil. It is an evil because, though doubtless all people are equal in the sight of God, they are never equal in the sight of man, though egalitarianism pretends that they can be and must be. Mr Sefton, in a letter which touches and upsets me, is very shocked that I should speak of lifeless people walking about among us. But has he never felt or said that such an among his acquaintance is "lifeless", that such another is "livelier", that such a third is "livelier", that such a fourth is "livelier", that such a fifth is "livelier", that such a sixth is "livelier", that such a seventh is "livelier", that such an eighth is "livelier", that such a ninth is "livelier", that such a tenth is "livelier", that such an eleventh is "livelier", that such a twelfth is "livelier", that such a thirteenth is "livelier", that such a fourteenth is "livelier", that such a fifteenth is "livelier", that such a sixteenth is "livelier", that such a seventeenth is "livelier", that such an eighteenth is "livelier", that such a nineteenth is "livelier", that such a twentieth is "livelier", that such a twenty-first is "livelier", that such a twenty-second is "livelier", that such a twenty-third is "livelier", that such a twenty-fourth is "livelier", that such a twenty-fifth is "livelier", that such a twenty-sixth is "livelier", 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By Michael Twaddle

It is in the latter part of Etinger's contribution that the "populist" thread—at least as it is displayed here—shows its weakness. This is the case because it is over-identified with the people: to be more specific, the history of the Zionist movement and the emergence of the state of Israel are treated in such detail as to be almost identical with the history of the people of Israel. This may correspond to the centrality of Israel in the life of world Jewry but it is not reconcilable with a work that purports to be a history of the Jewish people, for it simply fails to give due consideration the major part of that people. The most obvious deficiency concerns the Jews of America. From the half-dozen or so pages devoted to American Jewry, the reader is left with the impression that this book will gain anything beyond an inkling of their importance either in American or world-Jewish life. This Israelocentrism, by reason of its misplaced emphasis, mars the value of the concluding section of the history. For the rest, however, here is a work that triumphantly makes available the fruits of a wealth of learning and scholarship that will surely establish new standards for the preparation of such a history. It does not penetrate the central mystery of Jewish survival but it does all that the historian can.

Annual subscription (inc. postage): \$12.50 £5.50
Sales and Distribution: Israbook, P.O.Box 7705, Jerusalem.

The dogma of 'balance'

By Amos Perlmutter

JOHN NORTON MOORE:
The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Volume 1: Readings (1,067pp)
Volume 2: Readings (1,193pp)
Volume 3: Documents (1,248pp)
Princeton University Press. £39.50.

MICHAEL BRECHER:
Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy
639pp. Oxford University Press.
£9.50.

JON D. GLASSMAN:
Arms for the Arabs
The Soviet Union and War in the
Middle East
219pp. Johns Hopkins University
Press. £8.75.

While the coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the media is generally as unsatisfactory as it is extensive, one would expect that within the scholarly community a more sober and reflective mood would prevail. Yet a cursory survey of the literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals very few writers, whether scholars, jurists, or "experts" who seem able to articulate a more comprehensive and detached view than columnists or reporters.

The bulk of the literature in English, French, Arabic and Hebrew falls into five general categories: (1) pamphlets and opinion writings that are mainly the products of publicists and propagandists in the pay of the governments immediately involved; (2) publications of dubious objectivity and credibility from various institutes and research centres, often on the payroll of governments; (3) superficial political interests; (4) superficial "instant" papers by certain Western journalists who believe a short sojourn in the area gives them a mastery of the subject; (5) apolo-

gical accounts by politicians and other participants. Arab, Israeli or foreign, and the still more misleading, auto-biographical writings, memoirs and interviews in which the authors recount their heroic role in some Middle Eastern adventure, often revealing only their own ignorance or malice; and (5) scholarly attempts at balance, the efforts to achieve a balance between an ideology, an end in itself. The usefulness of these last in explaining the psychological and political causes of the conflict is thus restricted, even if their motivations are noble.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict is a classic example of the way the dogma of objectivity and "balance" prevents incisive analysis. Under the sponsorship of the American Society of International Law, John Norton Moore has assembled, in three volumes, a staggering number of legal briefs and interpretative essays (over 130 altogether). The amount of work which has gone into the compilation would be apparent simply from reading the table of contents. Mr. Moore has marshalled an impressive array of distinguished contributors—academics, practising jurists and other scholars—and made a comprehensive effort to juxtapose conflicting opinions, views and judgments on such crucial issues as the Suez Canal crisis, the Six Day War, the role of the United Nations and international law, the rights of Jews and Palestinians, UN Resolution No. 242 and the complex issue of boundaries.

In "The Underlying Issues" Nathan Feinberg, Julius Stone and Yehoshafat Harkabi defend the rights of Jews on Palestine, while W. T. Mallison Jr., Cherif Bassouini and Samir Amawi defend the Palestinian rights over the same territory. Each, as good advocates, should have denied the fundamental assumption of their opponents' legal, juridical and political claims. Others, such as Doron Peretz and George Tompkins, by omission, only added to the misunderstanding of the underlying issues.

The second volume is the more pretentious of the two. Here the international lawyers, historians, political scientists and academic and ideological champions of both Israel and the Arabs, have gone to battle. The open or clandestine hostility embedded in most of the pieces underlines the irreconcilability of the conflict rather than the resolution anticipated by the editor and his aides.

"Thoughts on Settlements", perhaps better titled "Misperceptions on Settlements", blends the brilliant essays of Blum and Quincy Wright with the ideological animadversions of Nahum Goldhamer, Henry Cattan and Senator William Fulbright. To add to our confusion, the editor has piled on the pronouncements by Middle Eastern and American political leaders offering "solutions" more appropriate to Mars than the Middle East.

Nevertheless, The Arab-Israeli Conflict is an outstanding reference work. The third volume, for example, contains 189 crucial documents from the Zionist Baski Programme of 1897 to the 1974 Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement. Its major failure is that the reader who manages to work his way through the 3,500 pages does not emerge with a better understanding of the conflict, although he certainly emerges with more information about it. Selective editing would have reduced the volumes to reasonable size and given the reader a chance to form some broad impressions. If not conclusions, concerning the conflict. If one is in search of explanation (political or otherwise), this indiscriminate outpouring of papers and positions will not provide it.

The book's "principal purpose", according to the editor, "is to promote greater understanding of one of the most persistent and explosive challenges to world order of our time", but the reader is never provided with any yardstick with which to measure the accuracy of this

assessment of the "explosiveness" of the Arab-Israeli challenge. The very reason the excited goal of promoting understanding is not fulfilled is precisely because of another stated aim: "In selecting readings and documents for inclusion, every effort has been made to achieve a balance on the issues and presentation of the principal viewpoints."

The editor assumes that a balanced presentation of the issues has been achieved because most of the legal aspects of the conflict and all the scholarly viewpoints have been represented. But this governing thesis, and the legalist interpretation of aspects and institutions of conflict resolution, obscure the very issues for which an explanation is sought. No insight can be gained because each of the crucial factors—the psychology and ideology of the conflict, the political, religious, and intellectual origins of the disputes, the political and diplomatic processes that exist during war and peace—has been given a normative explanation and interpretation.

Richard Falk, whose essay opens Volume 1, is probably right when he argues the need for a legalist approach to international politics. Falk states clearly that "world peace depends upon enlarging the scope and range of legal rules, the growth of habitual respect for law, and the creation of international institutions capable of interpreting and enforcing the law". Yet even Professor Falk could not read this book without a feeling of intense pessimism about the chances for world peace if he believes it can only be achieved by enlarging the scope and range of legal rules. The contributors to The Arab-Israeli Conflict are preponderantly jurists and international lawyers, yet their writings do not nurture any hope that legal rules are universal. In fact, most of them have done their utmost to narrow the scope of legal rules in order to serve their clients' purposes, political or otherwise.

The selection dealing with the seminar of Arab jurists on Palestine, which took place in Algiers in 1967, reveals this sort of self-serving legalism in microcosm. The Arab assembly categorically denied that the Jews possessed any historical rights to Israel, proclaimed the illegitimacy of Zionism, declared the "Jewish" Zionists and called Zionism a "fraudulent exploitation of religious and humanitarian feelings". Zionism was further categorized for its imperialistic character and racist philosophy, and its presumed violation of the League of Nations covenants and United Nations resolutions. The "imperialism" of the United Nations in the matter of Palestine was claimed, as was the "illegality" of the 1947 partition. To accept all this would be tantamount to legitimizing the non-recognition of the sovereignty of Israel and thus accepting a de facto state of permanent war.

It is certainly hard to condemn the whole work on the basis of the kind of hypocrisy, but among a few other combatants, jurists, and scholars, one discerns a tacit acceptance of this thesis, clothed by Bassouini and Fisher and Bushan Hamad with brilliant legal interventions and historical proclamations. Professor Bassouini, one of the most gifted advocates of the Arab cause, deserves high acclaim for his heroic and fascinating effort to defend unresolvable issues and non-existent facts. This is only matched by the brilliant virtuosity of Julius Stone on behalf of Israel.

Professors Stone, Feinberg, Wun, Lauterpacht and Gross all do their best to rebut the Arab jurist assumptions, legal arguments and resolutions. But will these rebuttals, and appeals to international law and legalism change the categorical commitment of Arab jurists, intellectuals and men of action? Will it modify their perceptions, commitments and aspirations? Will it be skillfully balanced and worded by the editor, a leading scholar of international law, to persuade or bend the historically founded aspirations, assumptions and commitments of the Arabs? Mr. Moore has somehow brought himself to write these words: "The

tortured history of the efforts at belligerent solutions strongly suggest that a peaceful solution is the only solution." In selecting readings and documents for inclusion, every effort has been made to achieve a balance on the issues and presentation of the principal viewpoints."

In fact, The Arab-Israeli Conflict demonstrates that laws, legal institutions, and international law enforcement agencies, may well be at the service of Professor Falk's anti-legalist school, those Machiavellianists who argue that the best prospect for peace depends upon the renunciation of balance between the capabilities and commitments of antagonistic countries and ideologies. In this book, both pro-Arab and pro-Israeli jurists demonstrate greater respect for national interests, their clients, and ideology than for the growth of the rule of law and "world peace".

The fact remains that neither Falk's so-called legalists nor their opponents (both committed to some form of maintenance of order although recommending different instruments, either diplomacy and international law, or force and national law) have enhanced our understanding of the underlying issues of the conflict, because essays on jurisprudence and international law cannot perform this function. No balance of views is possible.

The Arab literature on the conflict, created by a multitude of jurists, jurists, government publicists, ideologues and political writers, is produced under the auspices of their respective governments. In the Arab world the ideology of the conflict, its dogma, Arab attitude generally towards Israel, Jews and Zionism, is no longer spontaneous or even nationalist. Instead, a dogma has appeared that equals in scope the method, the dogmas of Marxist-Leninism. It constitutes a guide for action, a reflection. The conflict has become highly institutionalized; it is no longer a simple struggle between Zionist and Palestinian nationalists over a specified piece of desert territory, but an all-encompassing struggle.

The Israeli government and Zionist writers are sympathizers and have, of course, also produced a prolific literature that is hardly devoid of ideological mumbo-jumbo. Nevertheless, there is a marked distinction between Zionist and Arab propaganda. The Zionist propaganda is not (as yet) a state doctrine or dogma. The difference between Arab and Israeli propaganda is that the anti-Israeli, antisemitic and anti-Zionist propaganda in the Arab world is used to mobilize Arab masses for political purposes by different regimes and rulers, among others, to persuade them of a historical mission to annihilate Israel, a jihad. Zionist propaganda was used internally to mobilize Jewish people to settle in Israel; it was used externally to persuade the public opinion of the righteousness of the Jewish cause. The difference is considerable; the mobilization of ideas to incite people to destroy others is certainly not the same as the mobilization of opinion on behalf of one's cause.

In the Arab world, agitation, the use of social energy to achieve ideological change, is the aim of an elaborate machinery exceeded in scope only by that of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China. This machinery is not legal and rational but is bitter and asymmetrical ideological battle that cannot be influenced by normative strictures and prescriptions. In this sense all the eloquence of The Arab-Israeli Conflict is misplaced.

The problem of Jerusalem, for instance, which is the heart of the conflict, cannot be illuminated by reference to juridical points and counterpoints. This struggle, which originated with the formation of the Palestinian nationalist movement in 1920 and the Zionist political, diplomatic and military effort to turn Jerusalem Jewish, is still the major bone of contention. Unquestionably, King Abdullah of Jordan would not have gone to the best books yet to appear on Soviet policy in the Middle East. He leaves us with the impression that the Soviet leadership fails to maintain the balance which he has tried to persuade us they do. The Middle Eastern conflict will once again become highly explosive.

the "return" of Jerusalem, i.e. the Israeli conquest of Jordanian Jerusalem, as the high point of the only solution to the future of Jerusalem may make the conflict permanently irreconcilable.

In Michael Brecher's erudite and meticulous study *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* the focus is on an analysis of the Israeli elite's decision-making process in seven key issues. One of them is the question of Jerusalem from 1948 to 1950. This work represents a valuable effort to dissect the sources of conflict in the region. True, Professor Brecher deals only with Israeli decision-making processes and a complementary book on Palestinian and Arab League decision-making is essential. Yet Professor Brecher's evaluations, based on some of the most advanced social science research techniques, are exemplary. In addition, he handles the problem head on and makes no attempt to hide behind political exegeses. His analysis of the mental processes of Israeli decision-makers, working in a context of prejudices, misperceptions, and limited options, yields considerably more understanding on the issue of Jerusalem and its pivotal importance to Israelis than the examination of dead letters, proclamations, legal tracts, and documents, whose origin must be recognized as politically motivated.

In my view the underlying issues will be elucidated by studying the politics of the creators of the Balfour Declaration and the Hussein-McMahon agreements, of the Arab League, and the world Zionist movement, of the United Nations, and the relations between East and West, rather than by the scholarly interpretation of the often hasty political proclamations of hard-line ministers and governments.

Take, for instance, Professor Brecher's analysis of the Sinai Campaign of 1956. He methodically outlines the political, military and economic factors that led to the decision to go to war. Analysing the operational environment, Brecher discovered that many decisions made by the Israeli defence forces and Ben Gurion in connection with the war were inseparable from the internal political environment in Israel. In a fascinating portrayal of the conceptual world of Israeli decision-makers, he demonstrates the frequent irrelevance of international considerations in the actions of Ben Gurion and his disciples for international organizations was matched by his apprehension of the leverage the United States would bring to bear on the actions. He had suspicions of the British and had a great desire to be independent as he could from the French. The decision to go to war was only made because Israel seized a rare opportunity to internationalize the conflict to its own purposes, but the subsequent Israeli perception of Arab hostility certainly tilted the balance.

Jon Glassman's *Arms for the Arabs* recounts in detail the politics of Soviet rearmament of "progressive" Arab regimes in the Middle East and its implications for international security. Like Brecher, Dr. Glassman seeks his explanations by analyzing the decision-makers and their actions and motives rather than the content of their pronouncements. I doubt that after reading Dr. Glassman's book Professor Falk could still claim that the choice of a peaceful world order was impaired by the activities of the anti-legalist school. Dr. Glassman demonstrates why the level of conflict is high, but he also shows why Soviet-American détente tends to contain the explosive potential.

This detailed study of weapons as instruments of politics, of the diplomacy and politics of the Soviet Union from its first military aid to Nasser's Egypt in 1955 to its rearmament of Assad's progressive Syrian regime yields considerable information. It focuses on the relationship between the local conflict and the global policy of détente. An analysis of Soviet arms transfer demonstrates, according to Dr. Glassman, the process of Soviet balancing in the area and the use of weapons to support but also to restrain clients. I am not convinced that Dr. Glassman has in fact made clear, as he claims, the limits that Moscow has established for military support of Arabs, short of straining the policy of détente, but he has none the less produced one of the best books yet to appear on Soviet policy in the Middle East. He leaves us with the impression that the Soviet leadership fails to maintain the balance which he has tried to persuade us they do. The Middle Eastern conflict will once again become highly explosive.

Détente and after

By P. J. Vatikiotis

MUHAMMAD SID-AHMED:
After the Guns Fall Silent
Peace or Armageddon in the Middle East
144p. Crown Helm. £5.95.

A review of the Arabic original of *After the Guns Fall Silent* was published in a Kuwait newspaper last year under the headline "Marxism, son of a pasha, proposes to defeat Israel by peaceful means". Reading the English version one could get the impression that this is what the author wishes to convey. Yet this would be an inaccurate impression and an unfair judgment of the book's contents.

An early member of the "Ikkra" Egyptian Marxist group in the 1940s and a contributor to the communist publication, *Al-Jamahir* (The Masses), the author became, in the late 1960s, a leading representative of the intellectuals of the Egyptian establishment. Basically French-educated but also a graduate of an Egyptian university, he grew up among the children of the ancient régime's ruling class. His Marxist persuasion and past communist affiliation, which he denies, stem from an association with the killing or deprived masses of Egypt, were consciously acquired in the turbulent years of the Second World War and its aftermath. Many other members of the educated elite of his generation underwent the same intellectual conversion.

Muhammad Sid-Ahmed is desperately concerned for peace and the triumph of socialism in the Middle East. He neatly divides the world of power into the imperialist and neo-imperialist West on the one side, and the progressive East on the other. His thesis is that détente in 1972 and the October War in 1973 have transformed the nature of and rules of conflict in the Middle East. Although the Arab-Israeli conflict still constitutes the core of the crisis, the conditions in the international environment "have given it wider dimensions and ramifications. These stem from the energy crisis with its impact on the economies of the industrial nations, the oil embargo, the growing North-South confrontation and the acceleration of violent conflict between rich and poor. His book is an examination of the impact of these new factors on the resolution of the Middle East crisis, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict.

War, the author argues, cannot resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, another war could be nuclear. Instead, he proposes the application of the rules of détente between the superpowers to resolution of the conflict. The ultimate irreconcilable objectives between the Palestinians and Israelis should be overlooked—frozen—while the actual course of the conflict is henceforth conducted by peaceful means. "Peace", Sid-Ahmed writes, "is possible not because the ultimate objectives have been renounced, but because the means of achieving them have been modified." There should be mutual de facto recognition between Israel and a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, with maximum economic intercourse between them and between Israel and the rest of the Arab states. Israel should be given a leading "qualitative" functional role in the development of the region in this way. It will be "digested" by the Middle Eastern environment. Here the author invokes the example of Lebanon's functional role in the area. Yet Lebanon foundered tragically on the rocks of an essentially sectarian conflict. Sid-Ahmed's comfortable dialectic, however, there can be

a de facto establishment of two states in Palestine without mutual de jure recognition and without either state having to renounce its ultimate objective of surviving the other or supplanting it. Over time, a synthesis of these two concepts will transcend both of them. The political liberation of the Arabs against imperialism will have been achieved, and so too their economic liberation with the help of an Israel integrated into the region. Sid-Ahmed's genuine desire for a peaceful settlement of

the conflict is linked to his belief that it will accelerate social conflict throughout the region and thus pave the way for a "progressive" (i.e. socialist) revolution.

What makes this different from other Arab treatises is the author's bold acceptance of a Jewish state in the area. Yet in his dialectical scheme of the region's evolution, there is every prospect for that state to revert to a community among many in the area, especially after a working alliance between Arab wealth and Israeli skills has been effected. This is tantamount to saying that in the long term the Israelis cannot hope to retain sovereignty.

As for the Palestinians, Sid-Ahmed asserts that their legal right to self-determination, to a sovereign state, had been granted by the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution which, incidentally, the Palestinians rejected at the time. But as their problem has acquired greater prominence after the October War and, according to the author, an international symbolic significance as the focal point of world confrontation, the Middle East crisis cannot be successfully resolved without a satisfactory solution of the Palestine problem.

Many will take issue with Sid-Ahmed's application of the superpower détente model to the Middle East crisis, or with his analogy of the two Germanies. After all, the latter problem concerns one people, which is not the case in the Arab-Israeli conflict. His contention that the Middle East, not Europe, is the most sensitive

region is simplistic. Both superpowers' view of the Middle East is only a function of their strategic concern over Europe. Nor is the author's view of the American diplomatic initiative in the Middle East as a conspiracy for the control of both the energy and Middle East crisis helpful or novel. In asserting this view he is forced to distinguish the American position from the "progressive" intentions of the Soviet Union, as well as to make such other blatantly ridiculous distinctions as those between "progressive" (Iraq, Libya, Algeria, South Yemen et al) and reactionary régimes in the Middle East.

The author places too much emphasis on the impact of international factors on a regional conflict. He dangerously ignores the local dynamics of conflict generated within the region whatever the external forces of manipulation and control. Given détente, the proliferation of local conflicts—now less of an ideological and more of an ethnic-sectarian character—may be more likely. In these circumstances each community will be more reluctant than ever to submerge itself in a projected regional "paradise".

Still, this is a forceful, thoughtful and provocative statement about the Middle East crisis. It is a rare and dogged—if somewhat blinkered—application of Marxist promises to the problem. It invites dialogue and debate, and it is to the author's credit that he is able to concede, writing from bitter experience, that even his neat dialectical projections may never come to pass.

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Across the language lines

By Anne Stevenson

T. CARMİ and DAN PAGIS:
Selected Poems
Translated by Stephen Mitchell
142pp. Penguin. £1.

SCHLOMO VINNER:
For a Few Hours Only
Selected Poems
Edited by Howard Schwartz
36pp. Menard Press. 75p.

It would seem that in the second half of the twentieth century a discovery has been made with regard to literature that will affect its history for some time. This is the discovery that in certain extreme conditions language can only get in the way of emotion; that while suffering really requires language is not a magnification but a diminishment of expression. The poets who have made this discovery are known to us mainly in translation. Most of us have to read the poems of Miklos Radnasy, for instance, or of Vasko Popa and Veluda Amichal at second hand. And yet recently this kind of poetry has cut across what we normally think of as our Anglo-American tradition with such force that it is hard to imagine a future for poetry in English that does not absorb some of its principles.

In so far as every language is the mother of its own poetry, family, translation is usually held to be an encumbrance to literature. In the case of recent Israeli poetry, however — as with most middle-European poetry — translation does not seem greatly to detract from its effect. This is so not only because some translations, such as Stephen Mitchell's translations of T. Carmi and Dan Pagis in *Selected Poems*, are so excellent that they constitute an art in themselves, but because the very nature of this new poetry calls upon language to extend itself beyond linguistic boundaries. Perhaps its search is really for a level of meaning we could call a subjective correlative — for a kind of symbolism that is not restricted to an artificial construction made of words on one hand and rationalized human experience on the other.

This is not to say that what we commonly speak of as "the Jewish experience" is absent from the work of contemporary Israeli poets. But even when their work is historical, particular persons and events are given instead in terms of images to suggest human conditions so universal that any individual experience of love or war or death dissolves in them. Again, though symbolism and imagery are familiar enough terms in literary criticism, later-day twentieth-century symbolism seems to be less an experiment in a style of language and more an exploration of that no-man's-land that lies between words and experience.

Dan Pagis spent part of his youth in a Nazi concentration camp, survived it, and emigrated to Israel in 1946. His poetry is distinguished by a tone that makes considerable imaginative demands, both on the poet and his reader. At its best, Pagis's poetry is cryptic, dry, hard, without sacrificing an underlying and almost unbearable compassion. He skillfully avoids the confessional "I" of the more emotional Americans; yet he eschews, too, the privacy of the English neo-romantics. He is not the universalist impersonal poet, since personally itself is taken to be ambiguous. In what is perhaps Pagis's most ambitious poem in this Penguin selection — a poem entitled "Footprints" — Pagis describes his continuing life as a mistake. "I was forgotten / in the sealed car, my body tied up / in the sack of life." And yet, because life itself perseveres without regard to individuals, Pagis must accept and the tolerance the human condition. "Who has given you the right to see? / How is it you did not see? / But I didn't know I was alive." Pagis answers, deliriously, confusing the tenses. In another poem, "Ready for Parting," Pagis describes himself as threatened by his dead from whom, nevertheless, he must accept.

I do not accept: one walk around the square, one rain, and I am another, with imperfect rims, like clouds. Most of Pagis's poems take place at the deepest level of faith where existence itself is examined and accepted as bearable. In the human predicament there are few alternatives: there is life, there is death, there are the eternal conditions. Eyes, writing in pencil in a sealed railway car, scribbles: I am even with my son when you see my other son tell him I am.

The poem stops there. Its irony is bitter. For it is, of course, Eve's son Cain who is yet again engaged in killing his brother, in Belsen and Auschwitz.

On a first reading, T. Carmi's poems strike me as being more personal, more American than Pagis's. Carmi was brought up in New York, so perhaps it is not surprising that his work sometimes resembles Elizabeth Bishop's. Like hers, and like Pagis's, Carmi's tone conveys a sense of powerful but detached concern. Many of his best poems are love poems. In "The Claim," he quotes from Susanne Langer. "Fire is a natural symbol of life and passion, though it is the one element in which nothing can actually live." Carmi takes up this theme and plays variations on it, imagining the day of judgment.

Your honour: always with torches, and at dawn, ash.

But perhaps this once (we confess, have confessed our guilt)

air, and earth and water, it is the life-giving elements, air and earth and water, that Carmi wants his poems to celebrate, even though these elements are forms of torture. "Go away, Go," he says in "To the Pomegranate Tree." "I wrote about you yesterday, I said green / to your branches bowing in the wind, and red — red — red — / in your fruit shining like dew." Later in the same poem he tries to dismiss love in the same way.

Come, beloved (I wrote about you two days ago, and your young memory stings my hands like nettles) But love, too, is like the pomegranate tree, still planted in its place and impossible to get rid of.

Carmi's poems are uneven. That is to say, the technique he has adopted makes the strictest demands

on him, for the images he chooses must not seem to be gratuitous, but accurate. And yet their lack of accuracy, and the way they are used, are all over the age of forty, but they hardly constitute a recognizable literary generation, and the alphabetically ordered selection mingles major and minor, central and peripheral, with no warning to the unsuspecting English reader. Thus, two heavily pathetic poems whose work has no presence at all on the contemporary Israeli literary scene, Berl Pomerantz and Noah Stern (one was a victim of the Nazis, the other a suicide), are each accorded equal space with Amichal, Amir Gilboa, and Dan Pagis. This quirky selectiveness, to be sure, has its occasional virtues. Israel Pincas, for example, another distinctly minor figure included in the volume, is a very good poet, a memorable departure from his usual expository flatness — a haunting meditation on passion, transcendence, and history called "The Palace", perhaps one of the finest Hebrew poems of the past fifteen years.

The translations were chosen from ones available in print, joined with poems rendered by Harold Schick and myself for this book. Dennis Silk's taste in this particular regard is unimpeachable, and the high quality of the translations is itself a cultural fact worth noting. Although poetry has been the richest area of Hebrew literary productivity since the turn of the century, until recently it was hard to find any English translations that were not grotesque caricatures or ignorant defacements of the originals. In the past few years, however, translators like Stephen Mitchell, Chaim Bloch, Shirley Kaufman, Dom Moraes, and Harold Schick himself, have been able to make fluent, even resonant English verse out of the faithful rendering of Hebrew poems, and it is their work, which is the chief strength of this anthology.

The task of the translator has also been lightened by the course of literary history, for Hebrew poetry since the 1940s has been far less intrinsically resistant to translation than it was before, as it is abandoned both the pervasive allusiveness of earlier generations of Hebrew verse and the ostentatious verbal play of the post-First World War poets for more colloquial modes and a kind of international modernist idiom. It should be noted, nevertheless, that there remains a stubborn residue of cultural distinctiveness in most Hebrew poetry that is not readily conveyed by these fluent translations.

From the echo chamber

By Robert Alter

DENNIS SILK (Editor):
Fourteen Israeli Poets
A Selection of Modern Hebrew Poetry
96pp. André Deutsch. £2.25.

This admirably readable sampling of contemporary Hebrew verse is very much a personal anthology, both enriched and limited by the vagaries of its editor's taste — and, one assumes, that of his collaborator, Harold Schickel, who supplied the apt though regrettably brief introduction and nearly half the translations. The fourteen poets are all over the age of forty, but they hardly constitute a recognizable literary generation, and the alphabetically ordered selection mingles major and minor, central and peripheral, with no warning to the unsuspecting English reader. Thus, two heavily pathetic poems whose work has no presence at all on the contemporary Israeli literary scene, Berl Pomerantz and Noah Stern (one was a victim of the Nazis, the other a suicide), are each accorded equal space with Amichal, Amir Gilboa, and Dan Pagis. This quirky selectiveness, to be sure, has its occasional virtues. Israel Pincas, for example, another distinctly minor figure included in the volume, is a very good poet, a memorable departure from his usual expository flatness — a haunting meditation on passion, transcendence, and history called "The Palace", perhaps one of the finest Hebrew poems of the past fifteen years.

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The Zionist founding fathers, one recalls, must have been a "Jewish nation", but Israel is not a very normal state, nor is its revived language in all respects a normal language, and the poets must make their poems in the awareness of all that is anomalous in both their national setting and their medium. Israel is a place where historical gravity seems to exert a force many times greater than at other points on the globe, because of the terrific political pressures all round and also because of the concentrated, plainly visible, presence of a many-layered past in the local landscape. The Hebrew language itself, for all the European features it has recently assumed, is still caught up in the images and idioms of its most ancient literary texts, and precisely in its suffusion with the past it has often seemed a uniquely appropriate instrument for rendering the anomalous Israeli present.

Yehuda Amichal is the most vivid instance of this paradoxical double-

movement in Israeli poetry. At the beginning of his career, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he was one of the chief creators of a new colloquial style in Hebrew verse, aiming through the cultivation of low-key ironies, marked local restraint and emphatically prosaic imagery, at a kind of Audenesque effect.

At the same time, Amichal has been acutely conscious — perhaps increasingly so in recent years — of the overwhelming density of history in the Israeli landscape, and this is one principal reason for his combining with the colloquial style a very insistent, but sometimes powerfully insistent version of the old allusive mode. Amichal often makes eloquently explicit a perception of the dimension of history that seems to underlie the work of other Hebrew poets as well. "This is the country," he writes in a 1974 poem (not included in *Fourteen Israeli Poets*), "whose dead in the earth take the place of coal and gold and iron / and they are the fuel for the coming of messiahs." Israel, for Amichal, even as he listens to the bustling, cacophonous and clipped speech rhythms of its contemporary sounds, sometimes seems like a deep echo chamber in which the voices of three thousand years endlessly reverberate. At one extreme, the "Palace" gives little indication of the invocation of Psalms 19:3 in the first three lines of the poem, an ironic allusion which sets the keynote for the whole meditation. At the centre of the same poem, focusing all its thematic concerns, is a citation of Ecclesiastes that gets partly camouflaged in the translation, apparently in the interests of metrical fluency: "One generation goes, comes / another, ruling skin and satiated / skin."

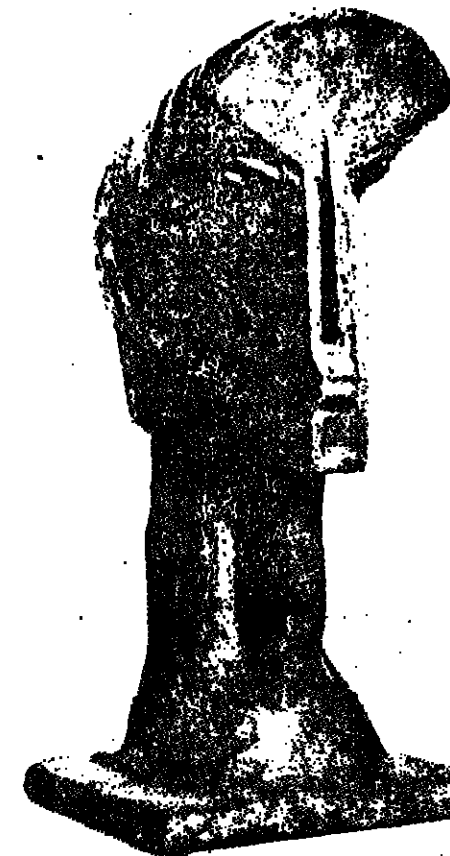
Some readers may manage to detect in this "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh", but in any case what comes after the biblical phrase is doomed to be glossed in any translation because it depends so heavily on an internally rhyming transmutation of the words from Ecclesiastes, which in the Hebrew are *dor holekh v'dor ba*, immediately followed by the words *ashet, eav* — literally "skin / (presumably, a synecdoche for flesh) reigns and skin / that has been sated."

This last example points up another problematic aspect of Hebrew poetry in translation. Though there are of course Israeli poets who present the reader with abundant difficulties in the original because of alliterative style, telescoped syntax, discontinuous imagery, or whatever, some Hebrew poets seem more perplexing in translation than they actually are simply because the Western reader rarely perceives the matrix of allusions that underlies the poetry.

One notable instance in the Silk anthology is Avot Yeshurun's "The Jews", which weaves an imaginative tapestry representing Israel's always troubled political destiny out of verbal threads drawn from Psalms, the Song of Deborah, the Song of Songs, and the traditional liturgy. To a reader who can pick up all these resonances, the poem is not nearly so mysterious as it might otherwise seem, but there is no obvious way to convey the necessary background in English except through a bristling array of explanatory notes.

Such density of allusion, however, is no longer very common in Hebrew poetry. What should be stressed is that even more typical texts, which may be stylistically spare, written in a conversational manner or a neutral modern middle idiom, the poet is rarely free of some sort of argumentative or midrashic relationship with the distant Hebrew past, and that relationship often surfaces at imaginatively crucial junctures in otherwise unallusive poems. Let me offer as a final example to illustrate this particular point one of the earliest in a series of striking science-fiction poems by Dan Pagis. The double-edged title is "The Beginning" (not the Hebrew word for Genesis), the skilful translation is Dennis Silk's:

In the chaos of ice, before the end of creation, wait far-off fleets of iron. Frontiers are secretly marked. Above the smoke, high above the smell of fat and skins, a yellow magnetic spot, and oblique polar rays, sharp-eyed, search out the signal. The code has been cracked. Now, with everything prepared for darkness, a wind blows through the hollow bones of mountains. And at zero hour



"Head" a maquette modelled by Jacques Lipchitz in 1914, was one of 130 bronze sketches donated to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem by his brother Reuben to mark the sculptor's eightieth birthday. A short, illustrated article on Lipchitz appears in Ariel, Number 41, a quarterly review of arts and letters in Israel.

Version English — you may destroy the natural style and rhythm of the Hebrew lines. Thus, Harold Schickel's generally admirable translation of Pincas's "The Palace" gives little indication of the invocation of Psalms 19:3 in the first three lines of the poem, an ironic allusion which sets the keynote for the whole meditation. At the centre of the same poem, focusing all its thematic concerns, is a citation of Ecclesiastes that gets partly camouflaged in the translation, apparently in the interests of metrical fluency: "One generation goes, comes / another, ruling skin and satiated / skin."

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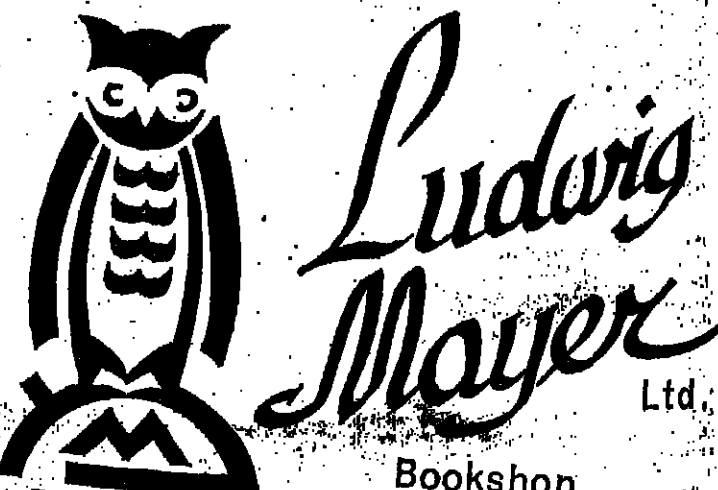
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The collection of rare Hebrew and Yiddish materials in the Helsinki University Library (which I examined in August of this year with the help of an award from the British Academy) owes its existence to a quirk of history. In 1809 Finland came under Russian sovereignty, and Tsar Alexander, pleased with his new province, granted copyright to the library of the Academy of Turku in 1820. When first destroyed a large part of the library, the university and library, copyright and all, moved to Helsinki. The privilege of receiving a copy of everything printed in the Russian Empire continued until 1918 when Finland won its independence. Thanks to the copyright, Helsinki University Library houses twelve special collections comprising books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, posters and other ephemera published in Tsarist Russia in various languages.

Of these the largest by far is the Slavonic collection of some 200,000 volumes, which is, perhaps, the best collection of Russian literature outside the Soviet Union. It attracts many students from the West who find the library more easily accessible than those of the Soviet Union. A second collection contains materials dealing with Russia in western European languages. There are also special collections of materials in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Caucasian, Armenian and Georgian. Finally there is a collection of Hebrew, in the sense of books printed in Hebrew characters, consisting almost entirely of works in Hebrew and Yiddish. The fact that the collection of Hebraica is the second largest of all the special collections is an interesting reflection on the intellectual and literary vitality of Russian Jewry in spite of the repressions of the Tsarist regime

and the rigorous censorship in force.

The Hebraica collection accumulated in boxes for almost a century and remained uncatalogued for a further four decades. Since 1960 the greater part of the collection has been systematically and efficiently catalogued first by Mrs. Penttinen and later by Mr. Haiminen, and each work is listed separately under both author and title. The collection comprises somewhat less than 7,000 volumes printed mainly in Vilna, Piotrkow, Warsaw, Berdichev, Odessa and Zhitomir. In many, perhaps the majority of cases, the pages remain uncut, so that the visitor may well imagine that, apart from the cataloguers, he may be the first person ever to have examined them in any detail. Most of the volumes are unbound and in their original wraps. In a variety of literature where rarity and fragility are the norm, the mint condition of most of the materials adds greatly to the importance of the collection. In many cases the copy of a work in Helsinki may well be the only accessible example.

One feature of the collection is puzzling. Apart from two volumes printed in 1825, and a scattering of books published between 1850 and 1880, the great majority of the works appeared during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Admittedly the closure of all but two of the Jewish presses by the government in 1836 severely restricted publication for some years; but both the Romm and Shapira families of printers maintained a fairly steady output. The obligation of sending copyright materials lay with the publishers, who were not always mindful of their duties, often containing themselves with minimal compliance. Presses were frequently small and struggling, and it is unlikely that

many publishers could have imagined that the Helsinki University Library was destined to play an important role in the preservation of their printings. It is unfortunate that the number of works published between 1825 and 1880 is not greater.

Nevertheless the range and variety of the collection remain impressive. Of the 200 editions of the Bible most are multi-volumed with extensive Rabbinical commentaries. About half of the 530 liturgical works consist of daily prayerbooks, while the remainder cover Festival prayers, the Passover Hagaddah and a wide range of prayers for special occasions. A variety of rituals, including the Karaites liturgy, is represented. More extensive still is the Rabbinic section which includes numerous editions of Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud, although many are defective. Medieval literature, Kabbalah and Hasidism all find a place, and some thirty of the works are in Yiddish.

The remaining sections are concerned with aspects of contemporary life and letters. Secular works of a serious nature embrace history, philosophy, socialism, Zionism, medicine, technology and agriculture. But the section devoted to belles-lettres in both Hebrew and Yiddish is, perhaps, the biggest in the entire collection. The twenty-five years prior to the First World War witnessed a great flowering of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and many of the leading exponents are well represented. More important, however, by virtue of its rarity, is the large quantity of kiosk literature, particularly in Yiddish, which has been preserved. These equivalents of the English penny-dreadfuls—lurid, melodramatic and crude—are read in great numbers by servants and apprentices at a time when the Jewish population of eastern Europe was increasing at an explosive rate. The collection (catalogued and uncatalogued) includes more than eighty such works by Sholem Aleichem (Sholem), as well as many stories by Meir Shalev, Buchsinder, Gildenblatt and other authors. Translations into Yiddish include the Sherlock Holmes stories with the crudely illustrated covers. The uncatalogued collection also includes the Hebrew children's library published by Tzvi in 1907, containing the 250 booklets in the Perushim series and the 10 booklets of the Nitzanim series.

The numerous Hebrew periodicals are patchy, but include a respectable representation of the famous *Ha-Alef* between the years 1878 and 1902; while the Yiddish periodicals include the first issue of an illustrated fashion magazine *Die Mode* (1906) from *Tzvi* and sixteen issues from 1918 of *Der Emes*, printed in Yiddish. It is regrettable that the copyright on the periodical literature was honoured so haphazardly. But what exists is in excellent condition and represents an important contribution in itself. Mention must also be made of almost 20 textbooks on the teaching of Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as many manuals of instruction for letter-writing—a poignant reminder of the mass migrations of the period. There is also an uncatalogued collection of more than 150 calendars, the earliest for the year 1831 and the most recent for 1913. The great majority are for the years 1893-1910, ranging from the tiny to the medium large, with many contain much more than mere calendar information, including features, advertisements and illustrations. These and other miscellaneous elements represent a unique and fascinating collection, deserving serious study.

T. Carmi

Translated from the Hebrew
by Peter Levi

On the Doorstep

And it was evening, and it was morning
of the third day
of my finding
a very small dead bird on my doorstep.

And all around the springtime was springtime,
halloo of living green and copper-bright
feast of desires and flowers cupped and white
hallelujahs of roses of crimson.
Unmoving bird on my doorstep
a tiny bundle of death,
an airmail letter with no air.

On the first day
I thought that I would hear over my head
the whirring of desperate wings
the swooping of the swift
(sweeping him off in a crowd of newspapers),
the back of my neck bent for the backstroke.

And springtime was springtime.

On the second day
I covered him fast
with a white plastic cup
attentive for the wingbeat of the shadow
to swoop down, and to extinguish my daylight.

And springtime was springtime.

On the third day
number three waited for me
at the same hour and in the same place,
like a dead spirit yelling for revenge,
spirit unborn,
stabbed out like an exclamation mark.

What were they like, poet?

I do not know.
Suddenly a violent wind blasted
from the impure doorstep
and shoved aside my head.

What were they like, poet?

I do not know.
At a tense arm's length
as one observes the slithering away of a dream
I did what is already forgotten.

What were they like, poet?

One tiny yellow point,
some inarticulate hints of greyish wing,
two black pinpoints,
blind striking mockery,
eyes, eyes, the malice of the eyes—

What were they like, poet?

But I do not know.
And the springtime is springtime all around,
there is a heaven between me and them.

The fourth day

And now what is on me that I shall do?
Shall I lock myself up inside this house?
Should I streak out of it with my eyes shut?

I did not treat them right.

I sit without moving,
my eyes are blinking without cease
like flying dark to light, light into dark.
At the front door I hear
a siege of chirrupings.

And if another messenger comes
I will lament seven
complete minutes
at the bedside of that shrivelled head
at the foot of the crumpled feet
and I will look at him
close, very close,
until the strength is in me and in flower
in every humbly.

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